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THE QUEST FOR GOD IN CHINA

THE QUEST FOR GOD IN CHINA

By the Rev.
F. W. S. O'NEILL, M.A.

H

"If ye had known Me——"

6456

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY
1925

This Book Was Given To
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By
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TO

MY WIFE

The four Chinese characters on the cover are :

"TAI CHU YU TAO,"

which signify :

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD."

PREFACE

THOSE who are determined to find the beliefs of other people altogether wrong are recommended not to read this book. No one indeed would care openly to avow such a determination. At the same time, there are very few of us who are able to preserve an unwavering attitude of trust in all sorts and conditions of men. Especially is this the case when our humankind is separated into parties, nations, and religions, labelled with names to some of which in differing ways we have been accustomed to attach associations of dislike. "Goethe once said that man's business is not to solve the problem of the universe but to understand it." No solution of the problem of humanity can be valid except on the basis of sympathetic understanding—an attainment greatly to be coveted by one who, far from being a detached onlooker, has been for years down in the arena immersed in the fight for the Highest.

By appointment of the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church fifteen lectures on "Comparative Religion and Christian Missions" were delivered during the session 1924–1925 to the students of the Belfast Presbyterian College. By invitation of the authorities concerned shorter courses were given in Trinity College, Dublin, in the Women's Missionary College, Edinburgh, and in the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham. The present volume includes the bulk of the material for the longer course. It will be noticed that of the four non-Christian religions dealt with, Buddhism receives fuller treatment than Taoism, Confucianism, or Mohammedanism. Although China is the field chiefly under consideration, the early history of Buddhism in Chapter VI necessarily takes us outside the borders of that country, as also does

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the closing section of Chapter X, which is devoted to "the most significant personality in Asia." Part of Chapter VII is concerned with Japan.

Discussions of the new movements, directly or indirectly involving the non-Christian religions, will be found in Chapters III and X. Christianity is the subject of Chapter XI and largely of Chapters I and XII. Should any reader wish to be informed on the faiths of China without delaying to consider the meaning of religion and its place in the mind and heart of man, it would be advisable for him to begin at Chapter II.

In the preparation of the MS. for the press, the author has had the assistance of the Rev. Professor J. Haire, M.A., B.D., of the Belfast Presbyterian College, Professor J. N. Farquhar, M.A., D.Lit., of Manchester University, Miss E. G. K. Hewat, M.A., of the Women's Missionary College, Edinburgh, Mr. W. J. Wallace Bruce, M.Sc., and the Publishers' Reader, to all of whom he is very grateful for their valuable suggestions and helpful advice. He wishes also to thank the Rev. J. B. Woodburn, M.A., D.D., Mr. W. H. O'Neill Manning, B.A., and Mr. L. A. Wilson, M.A., for their kindness in reading the proofs.

It should be added that, although in the first instance the lectures were intended for theological students, the author's hope is that the book may appeal to a wider public. For his aim has been so to combine the concrete with the abstract, personal impressions and facts of observation along with borrowings from experts in these fairly well-explored domains, that as far as possible the outlines of a living picture may be presented and the interest of the general reader secured. With all its imperfections of matter and of form, the book is humbly inscribed

AD MAJOREM DEI GRATIAM.

BELFAST, *October* 1925.

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NOTE

Fakumen, to which reference occurs here and there in the lectures, is a busy market-town in Manchuria, pleasantly situated between low hills away from the track of the railways. It lies to the north-west of Moukden; the nearest station is Tieling on the South Manchuria Railway, from which it is thirty miles distant, or about a day's journey by Chinese cart. The greater part of the author's twenty-eight years in the Irish Presbyterian Mission has been spent in the town of Fakumen, to which is attached a diocese, 13,000 square miles in extent, with a Chinese population roughly estimated at 500,000, much the same as the population of British Columbia. The Christian community is under the charge of five Chinese ordained ministers, placed in different stations of the diocese, and supported by the congregations which "called" them; in addition, there is a staff of evangelists whose salaries at present are mainly derived from Mission funds distributed through the Synod of the Chinese Church of Manchuria. Christian work in Fakumen includes a Girls' School, a Boys' School (having a Middle School department), Kindergarten, Women's Bible Training School, and Women's Hospital (see *Dr. Isabel Mitchell of Manchuria* for an account of the rise of this hospital, as told by the founder herself). The foreign staff consists of two lady teachers, one lady doctor, and one minister.

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND LIFE

Oh ye who tread the Narrow Way
By Tophet-flare to Judgment Day,
Be gentle when the heathen pray
To Buddha at Kamakura!

KIPLING, *Kim.*

Religion is of service in all directions; it contains the promise of life both for the present and for the future.

The First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy.

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND LIFE

Once on a visit to Peking I met a friend [1] of the War days, who, when he heard that I had come to pursue some inquiries into Chinese religions, exclaimed in an accent of surprise, "*Audi alteram partem.*" To guide us in our studies of Comparative Religion and Christian Missions with special reference to China, we cannot do better than adopt as our first principle that simple postulate of fair dealing. "Hear the other side," is an obligation which the Church in the past, to her loss, has been slow in accepting. For the sake of the young daughter churches on the mission field, if for no other reason, it is necessary to enter sympathetically into the environment from which those churches spring. In our comments on other people's faiths, let us agree to use the Golden Rule. Since we wish others to give us liberty to think, we shall allow a similar liberty to them; we want others to respect our views, accordingly we begin by respecting theirs. Let us beware of the method of comparison referred to in one of his sermons by Jowett of Balliol—a method which critics in the past have too often employed. "They have compared," says Jowett, "the best part of themselves with the worst part of their neighbours, the ideal of Christianity with the corruption of Greece

[1] Colonel Douglas Gray, O.B.E., R.A.M.C., of the British Legation. He was the Officer Commanding the splendid central hospital of the Chinese Labour Corps in France.

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or the East. They have not aimed at impartiality, but have been contented to accumulate all that could be said in praise of their own, and in dispraise of other forms of religion." [1]

This leads to our second principle of study, closely connected with the first and equally necessary : *Every good gift is from God.* Are we prepared unreservedly to accept all goodness and all truth, wherever found, as coming directly from the Spirit of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Nowadays that incontestable axiom is very widely admitted among Christians of different types, who may not be aware to what an extent they are indebted to the Society of Friends for the emancipation it has won for them. The Puritans of the seventeenth century, by making the Scriptures the only revelation of God, were in danger of losing the living Word. The early Friends on the other hand appealed to the universal and saving Light of Christ in the heart. Orthodox Christians of those days tended to honour a far-off Saviour, remote from their daily tasks, " in another world that they would only know after death, at the Last Day." But the Friends " could not thus shut God out of His world, nor be content to worship a dead Saviour." They " knew that God speaks to all men and had never ceased to instruct His Church." Hence for them, as Harvey says in his volume, *The Rise of the Quakers*, " the Bible took its right place, not as a wonderful God-made book, fallen from heaven among men, without a parallel of any kind, and with nothing in their lives to correspond to its revelation, but as the unique revelation amidst a never-ending series of revelations, containing the history of God's dealings with men exemplified in the story of the nation which had listened best to His voice ;—above all, as containing

[1] Jowett, *Sermons on Faith and Doctrine*, ii.

the great record of God's supreme self-manifestation to man in Christ, and of His work for us, to which the light in all our hearts calls us to respond." "As the love of God goes out to every man, all the world over, so those who are called by the name of Christ must let the same all-embracing love enter their whole lives. Friends to the truth must be friends to all men. Such was the programme of Christianity as conceived by the early Quakers." [1]

Besides the judgment of the intellect and the desire of the heart to receive all the gifts of God, the decision of the moral will is required for the discernment of abiding reality. Advancing thus a step further, we come upon the third principle for our guidance. After midnight in a Liverpool hotel nearly twenty-nine years ago, a group of students with Donald Fraser [2] in the chair decided that the Student Volunteer Missionary Union should accept the motto already adopted by the American Movement. Thus at the Liverpool Conference of 1896 the watchword of the British Movement became "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation." [3] That generation is almost gone, without our ideal of those days having been fulfilled. Was the motto then not in accordance with the mind of God? May we not rather say that the failure lies at our door, because we and our fellow-Christians did not wholeheartedly carry out our part? The world is a single family with one Father alone. Must not each generation of Christians hasten to make known the news of the Father's love to those of their own day who have not heard it? Europe was once

[1] Harvey, *The Rise of the Quakers*, pp. 63–70.

[2] The Right Rev. Donald Fraser, D.D., Joint Secretary of the United Free Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee.

[3] It fell to my lot to prepare an "Appeal to the Churches" to join with our Movement in adopting the watchword—an appeal which was well received.

roused to a crusade of war by Peter the Hermit's *Deus Vult.* With how much greater cogency may we proclaim that God wills a crusade of peace in every land to-day! The evangelization of the world, interpreted in no narrow or superficial sense, remains a duty incumbent upon all who follow Christ. *The service of our fellow-men in love*, completes the triad of our guiding precepts. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know." [1] Thus and not otherwise can God be found. If our researches are to be of value, they must issue in action. First, then, find out the truth from any source; next, believe that every good gift comes from above; and finally, let your light shine.

Having dealt with the principles that should be kept in mind in our survey of the higher faiths of mankind, let us now consider the nature of our subject-matter. What is religion? According to our individual temperaments, each of us tends to stress one element or another in our religious life—it may be mystic feeling, or theological dogma, or social service. But under all varieties of human type, "religion essentially involves the conception of an object of worship." [2] *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor*, said Statius. Fear is one of the mainsprings of religion, both of the higher and of the lower kind. The Messianic King in Isaiah was to have the spirit of the fear of the Lord. "Be not afraid of them which kill the body," said Jesus, "but fear him which hath authority to cast into Gehenna." [3] The latter part of this command is difficult of interpretation; it seems probable, however, that the reference is to God. Perfect love does indeed cast out fear,[4] and yet in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong

[1] John vii. 17.
[2] Davidson, *Recent Theistic Discussion*, p. 5.
[3] Luke xii. 4, 5.
[4] 1 John iv. 18.

crying and tears, the Son was heard for His godly fear.[1] At the same time we need to remember that "religion is not the child of terror; and the difference between it and the savage's dread of unseen foes is as absolute and fundamental in the earliest as in the latest stages of development." [2]

It will throw further light on this way of approaching our subject if we quote two modern representative definitions which do not necessarily involve a personal Divine Power. In his Gifford Lectures on "The Value and Destiny of the Individual," Dr. Bosanquet states that the religious consciousness "is essentially the attitude in which the finite being stands to whatever he at once fears and approves—in a word, to what he worships." [3] An illuminating definition to the same effect is given by Sir J. Seeley in his *Natural Religion*: "I say that man believes in a God who feels himself in the presence of a power which is not himself, and is immensely above himself—a power in the contemplation of which he is absorbed, in the knowledge of which he finds safety and happiness. And such now is nature to scientific men." "The true artist is he who worships, for worship is habitual admiration." [4]

To cover the religious aspirations and beliefs that will subsequently come under our notice, the most inclusive idea would appear to be that of Auguste Sabatier, namely, "the search for life." "When the word of God does not give us life, it gives us nothing." [5] It is however better to rely on the more distinct characteristics pointed out by Professor Menzies: "Worship of higher powers from a sense of need." [6]

[1] Heb. v. 7, 8.
[2] Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 55.
[3] Bosanquet, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[4] Seeley, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 91.
[5] A. Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, p. 47.
[6] Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 13.

The advantage of this definition is that on the one hand it sets religion apart from philosophy and from science, and on the other hand it is corroborated by our experience. Strictly speaking, philosophy deals with the search for complete knowledge, and science is concerned not with questions of cause and origin, but with those of phenomena and sequence. The moment we introduce the conception of worship, we pass the boundary line dividing both science and philosophy from the domain proper to religion, which alone involves in some form a personal relation to a higher Power.

As to the origin of the almost universal phenomenon with which we are dealing, prehistoric obscurity has kept the secret hidden. If anyone can draw aside the veil, possibly it may be the author of *The Golden Bough*. Referring to the aborigines of Australia, the rudest savages of whom we possess accurate information, Sir J. G. Frazer says : " If in the most backward state of human society now known to us we find magic conspicuously present and religion conspicuously absent, may we not reasonably conjecture that the civilized races of the world have also at some period of their history passed through a similar intellectual phase, that they attempted to force the great powers of nature to do their pleasure before they thought of courting their favour by offerings and prayers—in short, that just as on the material side of human culture there has everywhere been an Age of Stone, so on the intellectual side there has been everywhere an Age of Magic ? " [1]

According to this view man's first expedient was to control the forces of nature by imitating them. " To bring rain you pour water on the ground, torture a human being till he weeps copiously, or take the

[1] Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (one-vol. edition), p. 55.

'green man'—a man enveloped in grasses or boughs, representing the vegetation spirit—and souse him in a brook." [1] Frazer's conjecture as to the origin of religion is that it arose out of the failure of magic. When the more thoughtful folk began to discover that nature's forces could not be manipulated, they tried to win their favour. "To these mighty beings, whose handiwork he traced in all the gorgeous pageantry of nature, man now addressed himself, humbly confessing his dependence on their invisible power, and beseeching them of their mercy to furnish him with all good things." [2]

With reference both to the rise of the religious sense and to its meaning in primitive times, this theory is very attractive. If however we examine the relationship between these two activities of early man rather than their genesis in time, what strikes us is not their affinity so much as their antagonism. "In magic," says Dr. Gwatkin, "we do not trust the unseen powers we are dealing with: in religion we do. Bargaining with gods is not magic, for we cannot bargain even with men unless we have some trust in them. Thus Jacob's vow is religious, though a low form of religion. We are not using magic till we try to outwit or wheedle the unseen powers, or to compel them by the terror of some power supposed to be greater than theirs. The trustful sense of common duty to an unseen but kindred power seems the least which can be called religion; and the history of religion is the unfolding of this conception in its agelong struggle with the alien and intruding power of magic." [3] Broadly we

[1] Moulton, *Religions and Religion*, pp. 55, 56.

[2] Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[3] Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, i. pp. 248–250. A saying current in India illustrates the meaning of magic in this sense antagonistic to religion: "The whole universe is subject to the gods; the gods are subject to the spells; the spells to the Brahmans; therefore the Brahmans are our gods."

may conclude that magic and religion have a common source in their recognition of and search for contact with superior powers and forces surrounding human life, but the former led its votaries along a false track into a blind alley, while the latter took the path of progress upwards towards the light.

Turning from the obscure question of the racial genesis of religion to the more vital topic of its place in the mind of civilized man, the main point to be noted is the effect of the change of focus which in recent years has revolutionized the science of psychology. "It is a fundamental tenet of the New Psychology," says Tansley in his standard work on this subject, "that all actions and the conations leading to them are motived by, and gain their energy from, instinctive forces." "The human mind," we are told, "is built up of a bundle of instincts, which, it is true, are kept in check and therefore often masked, by their interactions, but which are just as much alive and just as vigorous as they were in the days of Neolithic man, which indeed furnish the sole driving power that enables man to do whatever he does do, good or bad." [1]

On the basis of this analysis, in much closer touch with the actual facts than the university teaching of the last generation, it is for us Christian students of theology to look for firm ground under our feet. Nor is firm ground hard to find. The clue to its discovery lies in the transformation of instinct; and the discovery not merely reveals to us firm ground, but in addition shows the new science to be a powerful ally in our task of harnessing the human spirit to the Divine. From the three dominant instincts centring round self, sex and society, let us by way of example cite two members of the group attached to the self,

[1] Tansley, *The New Psychology*, pp. 170, 159.

which are apparently out of place in a Christian scheme of life. Pugnacity seems to be opposed to the central Christian spring of action, love. But the more we come to understand the Spirit of Christ, the more we enter into the meaning of the dread words, "I came not to cast peace (on the earth), but a sword."[1] Instead of only being permitted to survive in chains, because it is too strong to be driven out altogether, pugnacity is indispensable. For us to cease to fight would be to succumb. Christianity is indeed a ceaseless struggle. Without the regnant instinct of the true fighter, of what avail would be the whole armour of God?

How about ambition? No way of life offers such scope for the exercise of this motive as Christianity. The Apostle Paul had two ambitions, of which one was to preach the Gospel where Christ was not already named,[2] and the other was, whether in the body or absent from the body, to be well-pleasing unto God.[3] If such lofty aims are insufficient to stimulate our energies, then we have the crucial test for ambition, as stated by our Lord: "Whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all."[4] The transformation of instinct therefore signifies that all lower and unsatisfying forms for its exercise are annulled or completed in the sphere of the spiritual life. The "passion for souls," says Professor Hocking, is "the *point in which the meanings of all instincts converge.* It is the positive meaning given by Christianity to the human will as a whole. 'Saving one's soul,' so far as psychology can deal with the matter, is the achieving of this passion."[5]

There remains the most thorny aspect of the whole

[1] Matt. x. 34.
[2] Rom. xv. 20.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 9.
[4] Mark x. 44.
[5] Hocking, *Human Nature and its Remaking*, p. 376.

question, the connection between religion and reason. To begin with, "the existence of God cannot be logically demonstrated." [1] Being in reality a postulate of thought, it is incapable of demonstration, but "is not the less certain for being the necessary postulate of every argument instead of the logical conclusion of one argument." [2] Now there is no limit to the absurdities that the human mind can believe. And yet, despite this melancholy fact, the ultimate foundation for religion does not lie in the rational faculty, but rather in the region of spiritual insight, otherwise called faith. "Whereas I was blind, now I see." [3] Does this mean that the intellect is to be silenced when confronted by the data of our religious experience or the articles of our creed? On the contrary, our mental faculties under the leading of the Divine Spirit are to be continually employed on the highest of all subjects. We cannot by searching find out God, who is only known by means of trust, issuing in action. Nevertheless, the ceaseless activity of the reason—the dissecting sceptical ruthless reason—must have a free field over the whole area of our inner life. No sacred scripture, no authoritative dogma, no venerable tradition, can be withdrawn from the careful scrutiny of the rational faculty.[4] For we are born to question everything, and, as with children, it is right that we should continually do so. From this point of view, although I presume none of us are enrolled in the membership of the Rationalist Press

[1] Gwatkin, *op. cit.* p. 9. Cf. Davidson, *Recent Theistic Discussion*, p. 30: "*God is a necessity of human nature;* which means, not only that in Him this natural spiritual want finds satisfaction, . . . but further, that it never could have arisen apart from Him as objectively existent."

[2] Gwatkin, *op. cit.*, p. 10. [3] John ix. 25.

[4] "It is a fundamental principle with us," said John Wesley, "that to renounce reason is to renounce religion, that reason and religion go hand in hand, and that all irrational religion is false religion."

Association, we may consider their definition of Rationalism to be in a general way applicable to ourselves. "The mental attitude," so runs the definition, "which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority." Of course we should urge that this statement only gives one side of the case. Before we question the universe, we must receive and accept it: that is the other side.

Is there then a reasonable faith? Some distinguished thinkers deny that there is any such faith. Clutton Brock says: "Mr. Bertrand Russell watches for the will to believe like a terrier at a rat-hole. . . . He is for ever facing bravely the truth that there is no meaning in anything. . . . All of man's mind except the reason is evil, or at least meaningless and absurd. Man can be good only in his critical faculty. That says incessantly: 'See what Tommy is doing and tell him he mustn't.' What the doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven promises us," adds Clutton Brock, "is a unity of ourselves in which the reason shall be neither slave nor tyrant." [1]

Such a unity of ourselves is the ideal of our dreams. Here on earth I scarcely think that unity attainable.[2]

[1] Clutton Brock, *What is the Kingdom of Heaven?* pp. 61, 63.

[2] See Sir Henry Jones's Gifford Lectures, *A Faith that Enquires*, for a masterly exposition of the philosophy of the Christian religion from the standpoint that unity *is* attainable. An opposite view is set forth by Dr. Albert Schweitzer in *Christianity and the Religions of the World*, for example in the following passages:—

"All problems of religion ultimately go back to this one—the experience I have of God within myself differs from the knowledge concerning Him which I derive from the world. In the world He appears to me as the mysterious, marvellous creative Force; within me He reveals Himself as ethical Will. In the world He is impersonal Force, within me He reveals Himself as Personality. The God who is known through philosophy and the God whom I experience as ethical Will do not coincide. They are one; but how they are one, I do not understand." "Christians have tried again and again to make of Christianity a doctrine in which the

On the contrary it may well be "the conflict of the theoretic and the practical reason," which, as Auguste Sabatier holds, "eternally engenders religion in the heart of man." [1] In a healthy growing personality the internal conflict is never completely set at rest, the believing part of our nature never being entirely in harmony with the discriminating judging faculty. Although this opposition, latent or open, may be over-emphasized, it is a mistake to ignore the element of discord which is implanted at the very centre of a true and serious life. Love does not make terms with criticism. When you are in love, intellectual analysis cannot be on the alert, and when you are in a critical mood, your affection for the time being is ignored. There is only One who is able to combine the severest judgment with the most intense personal devotion to each of us, and that is God.

The Christianity of the future belongs to men like Dr. R. F. Horton, who uses two Bibles, one for his devotions and the other for his intellectual studies. By the former his communion with the Father is daily nourished on the Bread of Life. With the latter all his knowledge of language, science and history comes into active operation in his eager search for truth. Thus there is formed the kind of Christian who is God's finest creation among the sons of men—the scholar who is first and always a saint. In other words, whatever be the means employed to attain the goal of life, our endeavour should be to develop all sides of our nature, beginning and ending with the childlike receptive attitude, which was central for

activity of the ethical God and the course of events in the natural world are brought into harmony with each other. Never has the attempt been successful." "When Christianity becomes conscious of its innermost nature, it realizes that it is godliness rising out of inward constraint. The highest knowledge is to know that we are surrounded by mystery," pp. 73–79.

[1] A. Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, p. 289.

our Lord—an attitude only possible through the denial and the death of self. "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."[1] And in passing I might add that the meaning of spiritual culture first dawned on me years ago in the theology class-room of our College, during an address by Dr. John R. Mott. Until then I had not known how to use the Bible devotionally, laying aside such aids to the other kind of discipline as notes and commentaries, and meeting God regularly in prayer over His Word. Feebly as I have employed the method, I can never be too grateful for what was spoken to the students on that day,

> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell;
> That mind and soul according well,
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster.[2]

Such is our aspiration, even though in this life the music made by the mind and by the soul should fail to be completely in accord.

To sum up, we have found that religion pertains to a different sphere from science and philosophy, whose subject-matter is intellectual material common to all thinking persons. In the phrase of the Schoolmen, *Pectus facit theologum.* Religion, and to a less extent theology, are of the heart, individual, emotional. We take our stand with Augustine and all the mystics, whose motto is the dictum of Anselm, *Credo ut intelligam.* "He who would know before he believeth," wrote the author of *Theologia Germanica*, "cometh never to true knowledge." "The heart," says Pascal, "has its reasons which the intellect knows not of."[3]

[1] Matt. xviii. 3. [2] Tennyson, *In Memoriam.*
[3] Pascal, *Thoughts*, xxi. 5.

And the soul can only find its home in God by personal surrender, by a bold venture of faith.

From that position there follows one inevitable consequence, which is sometimes overlooked. Whether our faith be right or wrong is not of such primary importance for us as the answer to the question, What are our own vital beliefs? The present studies will be of value to us in so far as, directly or indirectly, they reveal our own natures to ourselves, by bringing us into contact with other types of people at the points where our deepest life and inmost thoughts are related to theirs. Dean Inge, while holding that the essence of the Christian religion is "the proclamation of absolute values," Wisdom, Beauty and Goodness, the three attributes of God, also insists that "we cannot make a religion for others and we ought not to let others make a religion for us. Our own religion is what life has taught us."[1] It is not necessarily what we have read or heard that is vital for each of us, but what rightly or wrongly seems to us to be the truth. Those who are born of God are led along various paths by His Spirit.

In what way then are we linked together in one brotherhood, the community of believers, the Body of Christ? Always by being linked first to God. The closer we are drawn to our Father, the nearer we approach our brothers. "If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another."[2] As in the nation however, so in the Church, the difficulty is to reconcile the interests of the community with the claims of the individual. Can loyalty to the Church, through which we have received the knowledge of the truth, be entirely consistent with loyalty to the Church's Lord, to whom we owe all? Yes, on condition that

[1] Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, Second Series, p. 1.
[2] 1 John i. 7.

there are as many orthodoxies as there are sincere members of the Church, for no two persons can think alike of God. Within the orbit of the Christian community therefore, room has to be found for the personal freedom resulting from direct access to Jesus Christ our only Master. Yet how unwilling we often are to admit the ideal of the Kingdom—love to God and love to man—to be the enduring bond which holds the brotherhood together! Hence the battle of the creeds continues without end.

> He drew a circle that shut me out—
> Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout—
> But love and I had the wit to win;
> We drew a circle that took him in.[1]

There we see the Spirit of Christ bent on overcoming the disease of sectarianism, and gaining the victory in the noblest possible way.

Fellow-students, by entering this College you have enrolled yourselves in the great company of those who—strange as the phrase may sound to you—have renounced the world in the search for God. Other aims you have left behind. You have given yourselves to your Leader in the enterprise, the Author of your faith, and through the loss of all things you are on the way to the winning of your souls. Our quest then, yours and mine, is for God everywhere, under the most unlikely disguises, always with His own loveliness —God the Lover of all.

[1] Edwin Markham. "A heretic," says Bossuet, "is a man with an opinion."

CHAPTER II

HOW TO ATTAIN PEACE

ANCIENT TAOISM AND QUIETISM

The man who casts off all desires and walks without desire, with no thought of a *Mine* and of an *I*, comes unto peace.

Bhagavad-gita (BARNETT).

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
  Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
  The beauty of Thy peace.

WHITTIER.

CHAPTER II

HOW TO ATTAIN PEACE

ANCIENT TAOISM AND QUIETISM

On a wintry day in 1922 the refectory of the Grand Pure Temple was filled with some forty priests and acolytes at dinner. On the tables in the cheerless room stood the steaming bowls of vegetable food, one bowl before each diner. A solemn chant was being sung, whilst in the central aisle a priest walked up and down performing acts of worship. And during the long grace before meat the bowls of millet and greens were cooling in the wintry air. At the close of the grace, high on a wooden tray, an acolyte carried a small cup of the millet out through the door to offer it to the kitchen god who presides over men's food. Turning away from the refectory, one could not help admiring the restraint of these hungry priests watching their dinner getting cold as they gave thanks to God.

The temple, the principal Taoist establishment in Moukden, has in its main shrine a large image of a venerable seer behind a front of glass. The seer is called "His Celestial Excellency of Reason and Virtue, the Grand Pure One." Another of his titles is "The Grand Supreme Prince Lao." We begin our study of the religions of China in the company of Laotzu, the Sage whose name has been thus exalted, while his teaching has been well-nigh submerged, like a diamond in a heap of rubbish. But first let us sit down in the

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spacious guest-room of this dignified retreat, away from the turmoil of the city's busy life surging on every side. Fragrant golden tea is served. A gentle bearded priest in flowing robes, politely seated near the door, acts as our host. To him we proceed to put some questions; he is frank and intelligent in his replies.

"Has the Taoist Faith any supreme God?"

"Yes," he answers. "Our supreme Deity, corresponding to the Christian God, is 'The Old Honourable One who was from the Beginning.' He is the source and origin of all things." [1]

"How may we come to know God?"

"God is apprehended," was the priest's answer, "by purifying the soul and getting rid of wickedness in our hearts. To this end it is a help to live the celibate life, and to refrain from the use of meat, wine and tobacco, as Taoist priests have to do."

"What about the future life?"

"Our doctrine of the Wheel of Fate is the same as that of the Buddhists. There are thirty-three heavens."

"Are you afraid of going to hell?"

To this rather blunt query our friend smilingly replied: "I cannot be sure of avoiding hell. To be certain of reaching heaven would not be wise."

"Tell us, if you please, your opinion of the use of images."

"Neither Confucianists," said he, "nor Christians worship images. But with us the use of images is like the Christians' use of the Cross. The common people need an object in which the Divine can be localized, something they can worship as God. So images are a concession to the unlearned and ignorant."

[1] The name for the Deity might also be rendered, "The Original Prince Lao," i.e., the Sage Lao or Laotzu, raised to the throne of heaven.

"We should be glad to have some information about your organization." This he quickly gave.

"In Manchuria there are more than a thousand Taoist temples, having an average of two priests in each. That is a larger number of priests than the Buddhists have. Though there is no register of the priests' names, we have rules for discipline and can expel bad men. Acolytes are received at any age. They have three years of preparation, including coolie service, before they receive their ordination. In this establishment all priests, Taoist or Buddhist, are welcome to our hospitality. If a Taoist priest wishes to remain with us, he must learn to repeat five of our sacred books, after which he will be given suitable employment."

"Do you think Taoism the best religion?"

"All religions," was the modest reply, "are approaches to God; they are ways of reaching truth."

Attentively he listened to our exposition of the Christian Faith in Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, and in God the Father, Who loved us and sent His Son to die on our behalf. Whatever one might think of much that is mixed up with the heterogeneous system known as "Taoism," one could not help respecting this quiet gentleman who, to oblige a few casual visitors, so readily unfolded the essentials of his creed, involving separation from his ancestral hearth and from the joys of home.

As we have seen, the central place in Taoist worship is accorded to the Sage Laotzu, whose designation, meaning "The Old Philosopher," or "The Old Boy," in place of his family name, dates from about the beginning of the first century B.C. It was then that, apart from later legendary accretions, such details as have been handed down about his life were penned by the Chinese historian. Born in 604 B.C., Laotzu

was curator of the archives of his native state. When he had reached the age of eighty-eight, Confucius, fifty-three years his junior, went to consult him about certain ceremonies. Laotzu said to him: "The men about whom you talk are dead, and their bones are mouldered to dust; only their teachings remain. If a superior man is understood by his age, he rises to honour; but when he is not understood, he is carried along like a seed by the wind. I have heard that a good merchant, though he have rich treasures safely stored, appears as though his warehouses were empty; and that the superior man, complete in virtue, appears as though he were stupid. Put aside your haughty airs, your many desires, your affected robes, and exaggerated importance. These are of no advantage to you. That is all I have to tell you."

After the interview Confucius remarked to his students: "I know how birds can fly, fishes swim and animals run. The runner may be snared, the swimmer hooked, and the flyer shot by an arrow. But there is the dragon—I cannot know how he mounts on the winds and the clouds to heaven. To-day I have seen Laotzu, and can only compare him to the dragon. He teaches the vitality of Tao. His doctrine appears to lead one to aspire after self-effacement and obscurity."

Laotzu continued to reside at the capital of the state, but after a long time, seeing the decay of the dynasty, he left the city and went away to the frontier-gate leading out of the kingdom on the north-west. The warden of the gate said to him: "You are about to withdraw yourself out of sight. Let me insist on your first composing a book." Thereupon Laotzu wrote a book setting forth his views on the Tao and its living power. He then departed. No one knew where he died.

Summing up his career, the historian states that he was a superior man, who liked to keep himself unknown. . . . (He) taught that by doing nothing, others are as a matter of course transformed, and that rectification in the same way ensues from being pure and still." [1]

The little classic left behind by Laotzu before his disappearance is called the *Tao Teh King*, "The Canon of Reason and Virtue," in some respects the most remarkable literary work that the Far East has produced. Shorter than the shortest of our Gospels, it has often been rendered into European languages. To show the difficulty of translating its brief pregnant apothegms, I may mention that, including a borrowed volume, I have nine separate English translations, no two of which are alike. There is of course about the Chinese language a savour of romance. Never do we lose the joy of fresh excursions in that field, by finding out practically all there is to know. Far from it. What constitutes, however, the special difficulty of this classic in addition to its "extraordinary conciseness of diction," is that the "outline of a great system of transcendental and ethical philosophy" [2] is struggling to find expression through an imperfect medium. And the crucial question is: What did Laotzu intend to convey by the conception at the root of his thought, the conception of Tao?

The word is the ordinary term for road or path. From early times it was used metaphorically to signify the path of duty, the moral law, and also the course of nature. When therefore we open the *Tao Teh King*, and glance at the first chapter, we cannot but

[1] Legge in *Sacred Books of the East*, xxxix. pp. 34–36; Goddard and Borel, *Laotzu's Tao and Wu Wei*, pp. 7, 8.

[2] Lionel Giles, *The Sayings of Laotzu*, p. 11. The quotations from the *Tao Teh King* are for the most part taken from this, the best, rendering.

sit up and rub our eyes in wonder. "The Tao that can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name that can be uttered is not the eternal name. Without a name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; with a name, it is the Mother of all things. Only he who is for ever free from earthly passions can apprehend its spiritual essence; he who is always clogged by passions can see no more than its outer form. These two aspects, the unseen and the seen, though called by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery—the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all that is spiritual."

Now compare and contrast with that first chapter another conception of Tao, where it is taken as the nearest equivalent of a Greek term with quite a different history behind it. "In the beginning was the Tao, and the Tao was with God, and the Tao was God. Tao was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Tao and without Tao was not anything made that hath been made. In Tao was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And Tao became flesh, and dwelt among us." [1]

Between the Johannine Logos and the Universal Creative Principle of Laotzu there are indeed striking similarities. Both writers were mystics, striving to reach out to the Absolutely Real; both of them found the Eternal Reality within their own souls. So far at any rate the Evangelist and the Philosopher are agreed. Nor is this similarity only apparent. As will be evident presently, the ethical teaching of the Chinese Sage, five centuries before Christ, is saturated with one fundamental element of Gospel truth. Yet the contrast is no less apparent. Although one translator has for the title of the book, "Thoughts

[1] John i. 1–4, 14.

on the Nature and Manifestations of God," and begins his rendering with the statement, "God can neither be defined nor named," [1] it is generally admitted that Tao cannot thus be accurately interpreted. Indeed, there is only a single reference in the book to the Supreme Ruler. "How pure and clear is Tao. It would seem to be everlasting. I do not know whose Son it is; it appears to have been anterior to God." Or in other words, God is an emanation from Tao, which is identified with the Absolute. We have here a conception quite at variance with that of the Logos in the Fourth Gospel. The Tao in fact is "the spontaneously operating cause of all movement in the universe," [2] and Teh, or virtue, is conduct in accordance with the Tao, "absence of self-directed effort, activity only in so far as it is the outcome of the spontaneity of the immanent Tao." [3]

We are now prepared to sit for a short time at the feet of the Old Philosopher, while he expounds to us his cure for the ills of life, and points out the path to the highest excellence, individual and social. First, let us hear more about the mysterious Tao:—

"It is the Way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it knows how to overcome; not to speak, and yet it knows how to obtain a response; it calls not, and things come of themselves.

"It is the Way of Heaven to take from those who have too much, and give to those who have too little. But the way of man is not so. . . . What man is there that can take of his own superabundance and give it to mankind? Only he who possesses Tao.

"The Tao of Heaven has no favourites. It gives to all good men without distinction.

[1] Alexander, *Lao-Tsze, the Great Thinker*, p. 55.
[2] Legge in *Sacred Books of the East*, xxxix. p. 15.
[3] Maclagan, *The Tao Teh King*, in *The China Review*, xxiii. p. 79.

"Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from Tao; but the law of Tao is its own spontaneity.

"All-pervading is the Great Tao. . . . All things depend on it for life, and it rejects them not. Its task accomplished, it takes no credit. It loves and nourishes all things, but does not act as master. It is ever free from desire.

"The whole world will flock to him who holds the mighty form of Tao. They will come and receive no hurt, but find rest, peace and tranquillity."

On the basis of this transcendental principle, what kind of character and conduct does Laotzu inculcate?

"The highest goodness is like water, for water is excellent in benefiting all things, and it does not strive. It occupies the lowest place, which men abhor. And therefore it is near akin to Tao.

"Perfect Virtue acquires nothing; therefore it obtains everything. Perfect Virtue does nothing, yet there is nothing which it does not effect. Perfect Charity operates without the need of anything to evoke it.

"The wearing of gay embroidered robes, the carrying of sharp swords, fastidiousness in food and drink, superabundance of property and wealth—this I call flaunting robbery; most assuredly it is not Tao.

"He who trusts to his abundance of natural Virtue is like an infant newly born, whom venomous reptiles will not sting, wild beasts will not seize, birds of prey will not strike. The infant's bones are weak, its sinews are soft, yet its grasp is firm. All day long it will cry without its voice becoming hoarse. This is because the harmony of its bodily system is perfect. He who, conscious of being strong, is content to be weak—he shall be the paragon of mankind. Being

the paragon of mankind, Virtue will never desert him. He returns to the state of a little child.

"I have three precious things, which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle, and you can be bold; be frugal, and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others, and you can become a leader among men.

"Those whom Heaven would save, it fences round with gentleness."

Up to this point, if the aphoristic style of the Old Philosopher has not blunted our appreciation, I presume we have noticed little to find fault with, and very much to arouse our admiration. There remains, however, what is perhaps his most famous doctrine, *Wu-Wei*, or "Do Nothing," the Doctrine of Inaction —a challenging principle which serves to divide all of us into two classes, possibly along the lines of the temperaments with which we have been born. We are apt to be either contemptuous of it or enthusiastic in its favour. Let us then hear something of what Laotzu has to say on the subject:—

"Tao is eternally inactive, and yet it leaves nothing undone.

"He who acts, destroys: he who grasps, loses. Therefore the Sage does not act, and so does not destroy;[1] he does not grasp, and so he does not lose.

"The Sage occupies himself with inaction, and conveys instruction without words.

"Who is there that can make muddy water clear? But if allowed to remain still, it will gradually become clear of itself.

[1] Cf. Maitra, *Hinduism, the World Ideal*, p. viii: "If we want to avert all future wars, even the possibility of war, we must humbly sit on a prayer-rug, instead of always rushing about in motor-cars."

"Purity and stillness are the correct principles for mankind. There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, yet for attacking things that are hard and strong, there is nothing that surpasses it, nothing that can take its place.

"Without going out of doors, one may know the whole world; without looking out of the window, one may see the Way of Heaven. The farther one travels, the less one may know.

"The pursuit of book-learning brings about daily increase. The practice of Tao brings about daily loss. Repeat this loss again and again, and you arrive at inaction. Practise inaction, and there is nothing which cannot be done. Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know."

Applied to the individual life, such precepts have a deep value, veiled but not hidden under their paradoxical form. What are we to think, however, of their application to the affairs of government? For, like Confucius, Laotzu was a politician as well as a moralist, though with a very different panacea for the strife and turmoil of his time. To guide the policy of the state and the life of the individual, Laotzu laid down the same rules. Here are a few of his political aphorisms:—

"The greater the number of laws and enactments, the more thieves and robbers there will be. Therefore the Sage says: 'So long as I do nothing, the people work out their own reformation. So long as I love calm, the people will right themselves. If only I keep from meddling, the people will grow rich. If only I am free from desire, the people will come naturally back to simplicity.'

"The Sage, when he governs, empties (the people's) minds and fills their bellies. . . . His constant object is to keep the people without knowledge and without

desire, or to prevent those who have knowledge from daring to act. He practises inaction and nothing remains ungoverned."

Lest we should suppose that the Old Philosopher is merely indulging his cleverness for our amusement, it is well to look round for an exposition of this remarkable doctrine. The Belgian savant, M. Borel, will here come to our aid. He says: "By strifelessness —Wu-Wei—Laotzu did not mean common inaction, —not merely idling, with closed eyes. He meant relaxation from earthly activity, from desire—from the craving for unreal things. But he *did* exact activity in *real* things. He implied a powerful movement of the soul, which must be freed from its gloomy body like a bird from its cage. He meant a yielding to the inner motive-force, which we derive from Tao and which leads us to Tao again. Men would be true men if they would but let their lives flow of themselves, as the sea heaves, as a flower blooms, in the simple beauty of Tao." [1]

In taking leave of this noble teacher, we must not forget to note that Confucius was unable to rise to the high level of Laotzu's maxim, "Requite injury with kindness." When Confucius was consulted about the maxim, he replied, "Recompense injury with justice, and return good for good." Whereas the elder Sage had taught: "To the good I would be good; to the not-good I would also be good, in order to make them good. . . . With the unfaithful I would . . . keep faith, in order that they may become faithful."

One of the chapters of the *Tao Teh King*, where Laotzu describes himself as misunderstood by the

[1] Goddard and Borel, *op. cit.*, pp. 69, 70. Cf. Principal Jacks, "What impresses me is the deep *silence* of the universe, coupled with its unimaginable activity."—*A Living Universe*, p. 38. Also Goethe: "The highest cannot be spoken" (quoted by Jacks, *op. cit.*, p. 22).

people of his age, strikes a note of pathos: "All men are radiant with happiness, . . . I alone am still, and give as yet no sign of joy. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled, forlorn as one who has nowhere to lay his head. Other men have plenty, while I alone seem to have lost all. . . . All men have their usefulness; I alone am stupid and clownish. Lonely though I am and unlike other men, yet I revere the Foster-Mother Tao. . . . Those who know me are but few, and on that account my honour is the greater. Thus the Sage wears coarse garments, but carries a jewel in his bosom."

The cult of quietism can never pass away. As long as men and women in any land, turning their backs on the wild rush for pleasure, wealth and fame, strive inwardly towards union with the Divine, so long will they join in the silent hymn, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace." But when, like Laotzu and Tolstoy, the mystics leave the domain of the individual life and advocate "philosophical anarchism," unlimited trust in the people rather than in their rulers, at once we are in the region of conflict, it may be inevitable conflict. Tolstoy was anathema to the authorities of church and state in Russia. During his life Laotzu, not being sufficiently important to arouse hostility, only suffered neglect. And then after his death how marvellous the change! The forlorn one who twenty-five centuries ago, murmuring of cosmic impulse, "élan vital," the nameless living Source of all that is, passed across the stage, almost unknown, was subsequently raised to the very throne of heaven. The little book he gave to his country became a "canon" or "classic" in the second century B.C. Later it was made obligatory at the national examination for the degree of M.A. Its text was cut on stone at both the capitals. More important still,

the doctrine of the Tao in various forms has permeated Chinese life in all directions : poetry, art and folklore teem with it.

On a spring day in 1923 the President of the Republic gave a garden party in the Palace grounds for the foreign community of Peking. In the large reception hall, while the President was shaking hands with the crowd of guests, I stood beside an alert middle-aged Chinese gentleman, dressed in an inconspicuous uniform of foreign cut. He seemed to prefer conversing in English, in which tongue he was perfectly at home. For my part I had been introduced to him in order to beg from him a copy of a Chinese edition of the *Tao Teh King*, recently produced by him for private circulation. His leisure hours for fifteen years had been spent in putting together this volume, a careful concordance with introductory essays. He readily acceded to my request, and in the midst of the gay throng chatted earnestly about the Tao. Some days later I was told that there was one man at least in the midst of the corruption of Peking politics who was thoroughly clean-handed. It was the author of the commentary on the *Tao Teh King*, Admiral Tsai Ting-kan.

Two centuries after Laotzu there appeared a speculative idealist, whose exquisite literary style has remained a model for all succeeding generations. Chuangtzu, one of the greatest of the thinkers of China, stood in the same relation to the Old Philosopher as Plato did to Socrates, and Mencius to Confucius. He held that "absorption in the Tao is man's true goal," [1] and yet that the human spirit, far from being annihilated, attains thereby its highest bliss. A contemporary of Mencius, Chuangtzu ridiculed Confucius and his school in such a way that, as the Chinese historian put it,

[1] Couling, *Encyc. Sinica*, pp. 546, 547.

"the ablest scholars of his day could neither escape his satire nor reply to it, . . . and thus it was that . . . even kings and princes could not use him for their purposes."[1] King Wei sent messengers to him with large gifts, offering to make him his chief minister. Chuangtzu only laughed and said to them: "A thousand ounces of silver are a great gain to me, and to be a high noble and minister is a most honourable position. But have you not seen the victim-ox for the border sacrifice? It is carefully fed for several years, and robed with rich embroidery, that it may be fit to enter the Grand Temple. When the time comes for it to do so, it would prefer to be a little pig, but it cannot manage to be so. Go away quickly, and do not soil me with your presence. I had rather disport myself in the midst of a filthy ditch than be subject to the rules and restrictions in the court of a sovereign. I have determined never to take office, but prefer the enjoyment of my own free will." A speech loaded with such a scorn of kings and a contempt for rules would have made Confucius gasp with horror.

"When Chuangtzu was about to die," says the historian, "his disciples signified their wish to give him a grand burial. 'I shall have heaven and earth,' he said, 'for my coffin and its shell; the sun and moon for my two round symbols of jade; the stars and constellations for my pearls and jewels;—will not the provision for my interment be complete? What would you add to them?' The disciples replied, 'We are afraid that the crows and kites will eat our master.' Chuangtzu rejoined, 'Above, the crows and kites will eat me; below, the mole-crickets and ants will eat me; to take from those and give to these would only show your partiality.'"[2]

An attractive description of the future life is set

[1] Legge in *Sacred Books of the East*, xxxix. p. 37. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

forth in the following passage from the writings of this acute Taoist philosopher :—

" Chuangtzu one day saw an empty skull, bleached, but still preserving its shape. Striking it with his riding-whip, he said, ' Wert thou once some ambitious citizen whose inordinate yearnings brought him to this pass ? Some statesman who plunged his country in ruin, and perished in the fray ? Some wretch who left behind him a legacy of shame ? Some beggar who died in the pangs of hunger and cold ? Or didst thou reach this state by the natural course of old age ? '

" When he had finished speaking, he took the skull, and placing it under his head as a pillow, went to sleep. In the night, he dreamt that the skull appeared to him, and said, ' You speak well, sir ; but all you say has reference to the life of mortals and to mortal troubles. In death there are none of these. Would you like to hear about death ? '

" Chuangtzu having replied in the affirmative, the skull began : ' In death, there is no sovereign above, and no subject below. The workings of the four seasons are unknown. Our existences are bounded only by eternity. The happiness of a king among men cannot exceed that which we enjoy.'

" Chuangtzu, however, was not convinced, and said : ' Were I to prevail upon God to allow your body to be born again, and your bones and flesh to be renewed, so that you could return to your parents, to your wife, and to your friends of your youth—would you be willing ? '

" At this the skull opened its eyes wide and knitted its brows and said, " How should I cast aside happiness greater than that of a king, and mingle once again in the toils and troubles of mortality ? ' " [1]

[1] Giles, *Chinese Literature*, pp. 66, 67.

Between the Taoism of the present day, the most degenerate of the three Chinese religions, and the teachings of these ancient mystics, there is a great gulf fixed. And yet on such a subject as the search for longevity, characteristic of this form of faith, there seems to have been a continuous tradition handed down from the distant past. Confucius had said, "Those who have benevolence are long-lived." Laotzu held that "what is contrary to Tao soon perishes." It is probable that long before the sixth century B.C., there were methods of Taoist discipline in vogue for adding to the span of life. Inaction and taciturnity, the virtues of the universe, added to mildness and humility, led by an easy transition to the idea of absorption in the universe, which is itself eternal. In other words, virtue conferred long life here and hereafter. That is a noble conclusion. But there is another method, involving gymnastics for the body, rather than discipline for the soul. Since the extinction of life follows on the ceasing of the breath, it is natural to associate the breath with the soul. Soul-substance can therefore be drawn from the atmosphere, the more certainly because both soul and air are composed of *Yang* and *Yin*,[1] the dual principles of life. A paragraph in the *Tao Teh King* is devoted to the topic of methodical breathing. In Chuangtzu we read of a man "so holy as to be proof against water and fire, who respires even to his heels; his indestructible person is imbued with the ether of the Universe even to its farthest extremities."[2] Again, the regulation of the breath was connected with fasting, by this means training the body to exist as a god lives, without food. Confucius is credited with the curious observation: "He who eats air is a god,

[1] For an explanation of the terms *Yang* and *Yin* see Chap. IV.
[2] De Groot, *Religion in China*, p. 157.

and long-lived. He who eats nothing does not die and is a god." [1]

Besides the breathing and posturing gymnastics for the increase of one's years or the cure of the sick, there was the eager longing after elixirs of life, in quest of which, "Taoists have ransacked forests and mountain slopes for ages." By this means, as De Groot points out, the pharmacopœia of China has been richly furnished with valuable medical herbs. The best life-giving trees stood in the parks of the Queen-Mother of the West, who presided over the holy beings gathered from the earth into her beautiful paradise among the mountains of Kunlun.

While these ideas and practices are mainly concerned with the prolongation of life on earth, there emerges from them indirectly one important article of the popular Taoist creed. It is the belief in some form of immortality. Confucius did not care to speak of what happened after death. The ancestor worship of the present day among Confucianists is not considered to imply a personal existence beyond the grave. However warped and confused with superstitious fears the belief in immortality may be, among the masses of the people it still exists. That is the main thing. "If a man dies, shall he live again?" To this absorbing question the Chinese answer, "Yes."

And now in drawing to the close of a discourse mainly on the Chinese philosophy of quietism, may I turn westward and illustrate my theme by quoting from one of our leading authorities on mysticism? By so doing, each of us may be enabled to decide how far the *Tao Teh King* throws light on what Aquinas describes as "the characteristic human activity." "Mysticism," according to Evelyn Underhill, "is the art of union with Reality." "We know a thing only

[1] De Groot, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

by uniting with it; by assimilating it; by an interpenetration of it and ourselves. It gives itself to us, just in so far as we give ourselves to it." "If the doors of perception were cleansed, said Blake, everything would appear to man as it is—Infinite. But the doors of perception are hung with the cobwebs of thought; prejudice, cowardice, sloth. Eternity is with us, inviting our contemplation perpetually, but we are too frightened, lazy, and suspicious to respond: too arrogant to still our thought, and let divine sensation have its way. It needs industry and goodwill if we would make that transition: for the process involves a veritable spring-cleaning of the soul, . . . a wide opening of closed windows, that the notes of the wild birds beyond our garden may come to us fully charged with wonder and freshness, and drown with their music the noise of the gramophone within. Those who do this, discover that they have lived in a stuffy world, whilst their inheritance was a world of morning-glory." [1]

"To 'bring Eternity into Time' . . . ; to 'be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man'—these are the plainly expressed desires of all the great mystics. One and all, they demand earnest and deliberate action, the insertion of the purified and ardent will into the world of things. . . . They want to heal the disharmony between the actual and the real. . . . This was the instinct which drove St. Francis of Assisi to the practical experience of that poverty which he recognized as the highest wisdom; St. Catherine of Siena from contemplation to politics; Joan of Arc to the salvation of France; St. Teresa to the formation of an ideal religious family; Fox to the proclaiming of a world-religion in which all men should be guided by the Inner Light; Florence

[1] Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*, pp. 3, 4, 18, 19.

Nightingale to battle with officials, vermin, dirt and disease, in the soldiers' hospitals ; Octavia Hill to make in London slums something a little nearer ' the shadows of the angels' houses ' than that which the practical landlord usually provides. All these have felt sure that a great part in the drama of creation has been given to the free spirit of man." [1]

May we not therefore thankfully make use of the discoveries which flashed upon the soul of the Old Philosopher twenty-five centuries ago ? May we not add to those discoveries the truer spiritual insight of Him Who descended from the Hill of Vision that He might heal a suffering child ? In short, the conclusion to which we are led is summed up in the beginning and the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Digging painfully down through the sand and gravel of our fickle surface life, sooner or later we come with joy upon the solid rock, the rock of a heart emptied of self, upon which alone an eternal kingdom of character and service can be built. And then as never before we realize why at the very forefront of the Gospel is proclaimed the inescapable condition of happiness and peace, in the words of the First Beatitude : " Blessed are the empty-hearted, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [2]

[1] Underhill, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 156.
[2] Matt. v. 3.

CHAPTER III

THE OPEN COURT

A MODERN SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY

O my Exemplar!
Thou who destroyest all things,
  and dost not account it cruelty;
Thou who benefitest all time,
  and dost not account it charity;
Thou who art older than antiquity,
  and dost not account it age;
Thou who supportest the universe,
  shaping the many forms therein,
  and dost not account it skill;
This is the happiness of God!

Chuangtzu (H. A. Giles).

CHAPTER III

THE OPEN COURT

A MODERN SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY

When we think of the characteristic religions of China as being three in number, we should endeavour to avoid our Western idea of denominations separated by statistics into more or less watertight compartments. Such a conception applies to Christianity and Mohammedanism, but has no meaning in relation to the threefold group, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Since these three faiths are not organized into ecclesiastical societies, being in reality streams of influence and tendency, we can at least partially understand why the average religion of the Chinese is an amalgam of all the three. We might say that in differing proportions, Buddhist religion, Taoist magic and Confucian ethics are blended in the popular mind throughout the country. If however we follow the theory of De Groot that all three should be regarded as grafts on one stem, we may be inclined to agree with his dictum that "the religion proper of the Chinese nation is the Taoist religion, a system built up on . . . the doctrine that the world is ruled by . . . gods and devils, . . . the vicissitudes of whose operations constitute the *Tao* or order of the world." [1]

Before examining one of the most modern adaptations of this ancient faith—a new religion which specially

[1] De Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, p. 55.

appeals to the upper classes of society—let us, by way of comparison, accompany the plain "black-haired people" on pilgrimage to the summit of the most famous mountain in China, perhaps the oldest sacred mountain anywhere on earth. A visit to Taishan in the pilgrim season will make us acquainted with some of the practices of modern Taoism, as it were at the fountain-head. About twice the height of Slieve Donard, Taishan, that is the "Great Mountain" in Shantung, is itself a divinity, having been elevated by imperial decree to an equality with Heaven. To the mountain deity is allocated the function of meting out rewards and punishments in the next world. On several occasions Chinese emperors have ascended the mountain in person to pray for rain or fine weather, for protection from thunderstorms, or for a son and heir.

Let us start on a tramp up the hill with one of the pilgrims, whom we shall accompany to the top. It is a hot day in late spring. There are seven thousand stone steps to be climbed. Before we reach the top, the pain of one's lower limbs unaccustomed to such exercise might prompt one to give up, did not small-footed women slowly making their way down meet one continually. Their crushed feet had laboriously achieved the ascent. What a shame if I gave up! Here and there along the steps, beggars of both sexes besought alms; one's supply of coppers did not last long enough to earn the gratitude of all. An unforgettable sight was a spot where the steps were strewn with coppers, apparently without an owner, and yet lying untouched by the pilgrims passing up and down.

"What does it mean?" was my mystified inquiry.

Pointing away across a dry gorge, my informant drew attention to a cave high up on the rocky

mountain-side. The mouth of the cave was partially closed by a rough wall of stones.

"Inside that cave," I was told, "lives a hermit who calls to the pilgrims, asking for alms. They drop their coins on the steps and the hermit comes down once or twice a day to gather them up." I marvelled at the honesty and the liberality of the poor.

Honesty? Looking at the paper ingots representing gold and silver, which the pilgrims buy from the vendors near the foot of the mountain, and carry up to offer at the numerous shrines, one is not so sure of the worshippers' honesty. Or can it be that the only way for the god to obtain the quintessence of the precious metal is through the fire, and hence for burning purposes paper alone is suitable, just as in the Babylonian Story of the Flood it was the smell of the burnt-offering that attracted the gods, who swarmed like flies around the sacrifice?

At the temple on the summit dedicated to the daughter of the mountain, the "Goddess of the Rosy Dawn," there is more visible proof of the worshippers' sincerity. Entering the main hall of this very popular lady, we notice a wooden palisade or altar screen which, contrary to the usual arrangement, here shuts off the goddess within her holy place. Coming close to the tall locked bars, a surprising sight greets our eyes. The whole floor space inside the screen is covered with layers of coin, coppers interspersed with silver dollars, and here and there a pathetic little baby's shoe dropped in by a would-be mother. The dust lay thick on these gifts of the faithful.

"What is done with these offerings?" I inquired.

"At the end of the pilgrim season in the fourth moon," the attendant replied, "the temple managers come and collect the money, which lies here until they come."

In addition to the Goddess of the Dawn, the summit of Taishan holds another chief object of reverence, the "Pearly Emperor," "Yü Huang Shang Ti," the last two words of whose title are the Christian term for God. A famous wizard of the first century of our era, Chang Tao Ling, discovered the elixir of immortality, and before he joined the genii bequeathed the secret to his son. By imperial appointment the head of this family was made Patriarch or Pope of Taoism, and this hereditary honour is still maintained, though the authority wielded by the Pope is very limited. It was a member of this family who by decree of the emperor eight hundred years ago was placed in the highest rank among the gods. Since then, alas! Yü Huang has taken the place of Shang Ti or God, for the common people.

With a glance at an inconspicuous temple to Confucius, who sits somewhat neglected and uncomfortable in this alien environment of popular superstition amid the cluster of shrines on the hill-top, we descend the thousands of steps down the steep mountain-side, and passing to the capital of the province, find ourselves in an atmosphere away from the unlettered multitude, and face to face with a unique phenomenon.

Consider what it is that a religion, new or old, sets out to accomplish. Is it, in the first place, intended to deal with conduct and character? If not, then is the purpose fulfilled by a formal observance of rites already hallowed by tradition? Broadly speaking, Confucianism belongs to the former type, and present-day Taoism to the latter. Assuming that there are enlightened Chinese seekers after God, who, while dissatisfied with these and other known forms of faith, yet wish to preserve the good in each of the great religions, the obvious thing to do would be to construct a new system made up of the best elements of the existing creeds, but on one condition. Picking

and choosing from a variety of faiths might only produce a barren eclecticism, possibly pleasing to the mind of a cold philosopher. What else would be needed in order to satisfy the religious instinct? The required condition would be an unseen being or beings to be worshipped, with whom some means of approach and intercourse could be found.

Let us see to what extent a modern adaptation of Taoism has developed along these lines. In the winter of 1920 a Chinese army officer in Tsinanfu, the capital of Shantung, was playing with a divining instrument similar in use to the "planchette," though it does not resemble the small heart-shaped tray on three legs which is ordinarily called by that name. The Chinese instrument for automatic writing is a stick like a broom-handle, about three feet in length, with a slight bent twig inserted in the middle at right angles to the other. For hundreds of years this planchette has been employed as a means to obtain messages from the Eight Genii of Taoist mythology. Its manipulation has also served as a pastime for officials, who put such questions as, "When shall I have a son?"

Whilst amusing himself with the divining rod, the Tsinanfu officer was amazed to observe that a complete book had been delivered to him, purporting to come from the Great First Cause, with the title *The North Pole True Scripture*, or, in other words, *The God-given World-Centre True Scripture*. So impressed was the officer by the mysterious communication, which was to be the connecting link between the truths of the five great religions, that he decided never again to put the planchette to a frivolous use. After pondering over his experience for about a year, he founded in 1921 the "Tao Yuan," [1] which means

[1] Cf. *The Chinese Recorder*, March 1923, Art. "The Tao Yuan," by F. S. Drake; also, *China Mission Year Book*, 1924, Art. "Recent Religious Movements," by G. Reid.

the "Courtyard of the Way." Considering its standpoint, the name might be paraphrased as "The Open Court." With headquarters in Tsinanfu this new movement, which is spreading all over China, may be said to have four main characteristics :—

1. The motive is to do genuine philanthropic work.
2. The mainspring of action is found in the revelations from the unseen world through the planchette.
3. The intellectual basis is a combination of the Five Religions, Taoism, Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Confucianism, the Founders of which are to be worshipped, along with the Gods, Saints, and Buddhas of the whole world.
4. Above all, the one Divine Being to whom worship is specially due, is, "He who was from the Beginning, the Most Holy Primeval Ancestor."

The aims of the Open Court are further set forth in a small Catechism, in which it is stated that the object of the Tao Yuan is the equal cultivation of the inner life and of its outward expression. Generally speaking, the cultivation of the inner life consists in meditation, to purify the heart and moderate the passions, while the cultivation of its outward expression consists in philanthropic work, teaching and feeding the hungry being alike in importance. God is considered to be Boundless Spirit, the Primal Source of Life, but is not to be regarded under such human designations as father or king. Although the Tao Yuan combines the five chief religions, we are told that it does not create a new religion, for all those faiths spring from the Great Primeval Tao.[1] Hence

[1] For an exposition of the term *Tao*, see Chap. II. Yuan= courtyard.

to become a member of the Open Court does not involve the forsaking of one's own religion. In answer to the question, What doctrines does the True Scripture teach? the Catechism says: "That which has been already received is only a supplement to the True Scripture, merely dealing with the first stages of the practice of meditation. But its more profound parts consist of diagrams showing clearly the true manner of the origin of life." The True Scripture proper, it seems, is being received in Italy in the French language, and will only be completed at the end of twelve years.

During the month of May 1923, through the kindness of friends, I had the privilege of an introduction to the headquarters of the Open Court in Tsinanfu, and also to the branch in Peking. In both centres I made inquiry about the True Scripture. The reply to my query in Peking was that if I became a member of the society I should receive a copy, but not otherwise. This was rather discouraging. Later in Tsinanfu I happened to meet an elderly devotee, evidently a simple earnest seeker after Light. As he was explaining to me some matters connected with the new faith, I chided him with not being willing to let me see his True Scripture, though on my part I would gladly give him a Christian Bible. He instantly replied that he would make me a present of his own copy of the True Scripture, which he had been accustomed to read regularly. I confess I was taken aback by such a generous offer. But when I demurred to receiving the book as a gift, on the ground that a loan would be sufficient, he persisted in his offer.

"But if," said I, "you get into trouble by giving away your Scripture to an outsider, what then?"

"Never mind," replied the pleasant old gentleman. "If they want to blame me, I'll take the blame. I

am not afraid." His kind gift was then thankfully accepted, and by and by I arranged to send him in return a large-type copy of the New Testament.

Afterwards at the headquarters a Christian member of the society told me I could buy a copy, but I saw none displayed. So whether or not to be proud of my esoteric volume, I scarcely know. And indeed, its cryptic stanzas and its circular diagrams in red ink on the origin of life are almost an enigma to me, though that may partly be due to my lack of careful study. One cannot help wondering how much spiritual pabulum the members of the Open Court are able to obtain from their True Scripture.

On the day of my visit to the Peking branch I had the opportunity of seeing the planchette at work. The ringing of a bell was the signal for the members to come together from the various rooms in the courtyards for the ceremony which takes place every day, except Sunday. We met in a long room with a glass partition running lengthways along one side. Behind the partition in the centre was the shrine containing three polished tablets, surmounted by a draped object. The inscriptions on the large central brass tablet were remarkable. The Founders of the Great Religions were indicated in a row from right to left, with Christianity occupying the first place in the row. Above the middle one of the five, namely Laotzu, stood the chief inscription, to the Primeval Ancestor. But neither Christianity nor Mohammedanism was represented by the name of the Founder. Instead, a triangle on its base indicated our religion, and an unskilful outline meant for a crescent was the sign of Mohammedanism. At the end of the row, Confucius' name did not appear, for by revelation the Sage had made it known that in his modesty he did not wish his own name to be used but the name of his teacher, which therefore took the

place of the Founder of Confucianism. Strangest sight of all, after the dusk had fallen and the electric light had been turned on, I was brought over to look closely at a dark plate, draped with long yellow silk curtains, above the central tablet.

"Do you not see the portrait?" I was asked. On scrutinizing the black plate carefully under the bright light there seemed to emerge a vague cloudy outline, as of an old man's head and shoulders.

"That," said my informant with conviction, "is the Primeval Ancestor!" To such a startling announcement the fitting response was silence.

Looking round the hall one saw several tables beside the glass partition, each with a planchette staff ready for use. Smaller tables were arranged as altars, with candles, incense and offerings of white wine in small glasses, and of grain and water in bowls. Before the spirit-writing begins, the practice is to take a piece of yellow paper, light it at the small lamp on the altar, raise it flaming above the head, and pass it from hand to hand out through the door. This is followed by silent prostrations on mats before the altar. For the heart must be cleansed in order to use the divining instrument or take part in the ceremony.

With a group of serious well-dressed men all standing near, it was a very impressive sight watching the planchette at work. To me it was intensely interesting, as I had never seen such a thing before. Allow me to preface a brief description of what happened by the remark that from first to last there was no trace of trickery. Everything was done decently and in order. There was about the room the atmosphere of a religious service.

Under the planchette stood a sand-tray, on either side of which two young men held the ends of the stout staff, which moved with the utmost rapidity,

without a pause or break of any kind. It must have been a strain on the arms of the performers. From the tip of the crooked twig, character after character in the Chinese language was dashed on the layer of sand, which was kept smooth by the younger of the two performers using a long strip of wood held in his free hand. This boy, so far as my uninitiated judgment could determine, had only the mechanical part of the operation to attend to. The actual writing seemed to me to be done by the older of the two, whom I watched with some attention. His face wore a set expression; his eyes were fixed motionlessly on the sand-tray. It was evident that his mind was in a high state of tension, as his arm shot in and out, directing the movements of the wooden pencil. Near by stood a reader whose duty it was to call out the characters as they were roughly traced on the sand, while two writers at separate tables took note of what was thus read out. As I stood behind one of the writers, a fast penman, it was easy to see that the strokes on the sand were readable to him, since he was able to glance at some of the characters and jot them down even before they were announced by the official reader

A copy of the deliverance afterwards came into my hands.[1] Composed for the most part of phrases familiar to educated Taoists, the Altar Revelation of the "Man of Wisdom and Truth," who arrived from the "Mountain of Mystery" (i.e. the Arctic Ocean), was tolerably coherent, though too vague and abstract to be of much value for the guidance of one's daily life. Here are two of its sentences: "In order to wash away iniquities, make use of the spirit of a pure

[1] Dr. Gilbert Reid, Director of the International Institute, Peking, had introduced me to his friends in the Open Court. It was through his kindness that I received the document.

heart, and next, the spirit of the brain and nerves in harmonious interaction. Thus we return to the most pure and most excellent root of the soul."

However strange and apparently confused the new movement may be on the devotional side, it is quite otherwise on the practical side. The philanthropic activities, to which the members give freely of their wealth, include six centres in Tsinanfu, where city-waifs are fed and taught. During the winter of 1922 the Tao Yuan was the first organization in Tsinanfu to undertake flood relief. Continuously in the crowded market there they preach to the people, and for this work they have prepared special tracts. So far their chief effort has been the building of a large Cripples' Institute on a conspicuous site at the foot of the hills near Tsinanfu, in which they hope to support and teach trades to some two hundred halt and blind and maimed. For this building and its endowment the members subscribed over £6,000. When I visited the Institute, I was struck by the contented look on the faces of several of the inmates, glad to find some one to take pity on their infirmities. It is very instructive to observe the imitation of Western philanthropy under an Eastern name in the branch of the Open Court dealing with practical work. It is called "The Red Swastika Society," and has an organ in newspaper form, *The Swastika*. As the Cross is the religious symbol for Christian countries, and the Crescent for the lands where Mohammed is honoured, so the Swastika has become the token, not of Buddhism only, but of the Far East in general. In China this ancient symbol is not the mark of opposition to the Cross. Happily it stands for nothing less honourable than a rivalry in good works, and as such we welcome the raising of the banner of the Red Swastika.

Turning to the all-important question of results in

change of heart or otherwise, the two following incidents were narrated to me at the Peking branch.

When the Governor of one of the warring provinces of South China joined the Open Court, he gave up his plans for fighting, and proceeded to advocate peace.

The second occurrence happened with Marshal Wu Pei-fu, who until his defeat in 1924 had been the most powerful military commander in the country. For a time it seemed as if the political destiny of the great Republic lay in this one man's hands. A member of the Tao Yuan, visiting Marshal Wu Pei-fu at his headquarters, asked him if he prayed to God.

"No," replied the Marshal, "I have nothing to pray for. What I want I can manage myself."

"Do you not even want anything for other people?" persisted the visitor.

"Yes, I do. The people hereabouts are distressed, because no snow has fallen this winter. If no snow comes, their spring crop will be a failure, and they will be short of food."

"Would you like me," inquired the visitor, "to make petition for this on your behalf to God?"

"I would," replied the Marshal.

"You are quite sincere in your wish, are you?"

"Yes, quite sincere," answered Wu Pei-fu.

The visitor brought the Marshal's petition to the meeting-place of the Tao Yuan, presenting it there before the altar to God. That night the snow fell.

From another angle it is no small achievement for the Open Court to have gained the adhesion of Mr. Hou, one of the leading men in Shantung Province. Mr. Hou, a graduate of the second degree under the Manchu Dynasty, had held high rank both under the Manchus and under the Republic. In 1917 he became a Christian and was baptized in the Danish Lutheran Mission in Harbin, North Manchuria. Disgusted with the low

morality of official life, he left the Government service to devote his energies to Church work, giving his time freely to the Y.M.C.A. as an honorary secretary, and making it his aim to win his old official friends. To him the Tao Yuan, which he joined in 1921, is a means for extending the glory of Christ. The ordinary methods of preaching Christianity he thinks are sufficient for the West and for the masses of China, but not for those imbued with the ancient Chinese culture. In his opinion while Christ, Confucius, and other great founders of religions are essentially the same, since they all spring from the life of God, nevertheless Christ is greater than Confucius, because He had immediate access to God, whereas Confucius only in old age attained to mystic communion with the Divine Being. The high road to God has been opened for us by Christ, who is living now and present with us.

Although this scholarly mandarin still remains a sincere Christian, his action in joining the Tao Yuan was regarded by the Chinese Church in Tsinanfu with consternation. For himself, however, it has meant an uplift ; such is his own conviction. In conversation with me he said that formerly as a member of the Church he prayed to God and hoped to receive the Holy Spirit, but without definite answers to his prayers. "Now," he continued, "there is direct contact with God, and we have distinct answers to prayer. God is actually present. This gives me a sense of assurance I lacked whilst a member of the Church." Further, in the cultivation of his spiritual life Mr. Hou finds help from the instructions of the Open Court, which lay stress on quietness and meditation in order to obtain fresh strength for the daily task.

Having now briefly traced the history of this active religious movement of the last few years and having seen something of its significance both in theory and

in practice, let us next attempt to form an estimate of its value.

(1) In the first place, the Tao Yuan appeals specially to the officials and educated classes. It is an aristocratic club for men only. In government circles, broadly speaking, morality is at a low ebb. How to touch the hardened consciences of men in high places is a problem admitting of no easy solution. It is at this point that the spiritualist teaching of the Open Court comes in. *Blasé* officials, who pay no heed to ordinary exhortation, are influenced by fear in presence of the actual word of God written on the sand-tray. Startled out of their lethargy, they have even in many cases given up their gambling and opium-smoking habits.

Throughout the nineteen centuries of Christian propaganda, the leaven of the Kingdom has spread from the bottom up, not from the top down. Both the Gospels and the Acts show that this was the missionary method of the Early Church, following the example of our Lord. "The poor have good tidings preached to them." [1] There the foundation is secure.

But the history of Christendom is by no means uniform in this respect. From the Emperor Constantine and the lords of the Irish clans converted under St. Patrick to the African tribal chieftains of our own day, it has not seldom happened that the winning of the rulers has meant the baptism of the masses. Without entering into a discussion of the obvious dangers of beginning religious propaganda at the top of the social scale, all that is necessary to point out here is the strong position of the Tao Yuan, through the powers of initiative and management inherent in the class from which its members are mainly drawn. A Chinese proverb has it: "Men obey the laws as

[1] Matt. xi. 5.

the grass obeys the wind." And taught by Confucius, the people are not only obedient to authority, but also extraordinarily amenable to the example of those placed above them. It would be a great day for the world if the Open Court could draw the official classes of China to a higher and purer life.

(2) But in the second place, what are we to think of the peculiar phenomena, by means of which these *literati* are turned from their evil ways ? That in the case of many, like Mr. Hou, there is a serious search after God and His will, no one acquainted with the facts can doubt. And though we, who believe in a revelation from our Heavenly Father as both possible and actual, may not dismiss offhand the automatic pencil on the ground of its incompatibility with what we know of the Divine, still we dislike it as an implement for the discovery of the mind of God. It recalls to us the Hebrew *urim* and *thummim* of a bygone age. To say the least, we are sceptical, if not of the sincerity of its manipulators, then of the assumed supra-mundane origin of its messages. And we have every reason for being sceptical. Were the members of the Tao Yuan better acquainted with the subject of psychical research, they would be more chary of offering a supernatural explanation of the planchette phenomena where a natural explanation would probably suffice. At the present stage of knowledge in the scientific world, the possibility of communications from beyond the grave cannot indeed be ruled out. With reference to automatic writing, Professor Barrett believes " there is some active intelligence at work behind, and apart from, the automatist, an intelligence which is more like the deceased person it professes to be than that of any other we can imagine." [1] While the learned scientist may be quite justified in his

[1] Barrett, *Psychical Research*, p. 245.

belief, we are not likely to be far wrong in pronouncing the Open Court phenomena to be due mainly or altogether to telepathy and the subliminal consciousness. Even so strange a thing as spirit-photography has been shown to depend on the power possessed by some specially endowed individuals of creating phantasms of the mind, which are objectively perceptible.[1] We may question the existence of any such power; but at any rate we have here a provisional hypothesis as an alternative to fraud, accounting for the cloudy spirit photographs, which at the headquarters of the Open Court have now taken the place of the brass tablets of the central shrine.

In the general conclusion that the messages written on the sand-tray are almost certainly derived from the more obscure corners of the human mind, we are confirmed by an analysis of the contents of those messages. For after all we must judge the spirits by the nature of the words they utter. As Gwatkin says: "If the ghosts had a serious and otherwise credible story which gave us new help towards right living, we might consider their plea more fully; but this is just what they never seem to have. So far as we can make sense of their messages and compare them with known facts, we find that what is new in them is not true, and what is true is not new." [2]

The walls of the Tao Yuan reception-room at Tsinanfu are hung with scrolls, some of which contain beautifully executed pictures, obtained by fastening a brush to the point of the planchette. Among the spirit-writings are many signed by Buddha. The sign-manual used by God is the small g of our alphabet, approximating to the shape of the numeral 8. Two large scrolls are covered with cursive script, difficult

[1] Cf. Hudson, *Psychic Phenomena*, p. 289.
[2] Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, vol. i, p. 136.

to decipher, communicated at the altar by Jesus Christ. Alas ! when read to me by Mr. Hou, I understood next to nothing of their meaning. In fact the only two words I could grasp at a single reading were *tien ming*, " the decree of heaven," and I could not remember any occasion in the Gospels when our Lord had employed that expression. You will not be astonished to hear that I felt a little provoked.

" Do you believe," I asked my Christian friend, " that the writing on the scrolls is really from Jesus ? "

" Yes," he said, " I do."

" Is it like the Sermon on the Mount ? "

" Oh no," was the reply, " it is not so great as the Sermon on the Mount."

" Does it resemble any of the recorded utterances of Jesus in the Gospels ? "

When I had put this final question and watched the mounting colour on Mr. Hou's perplexed face, I felt sorry for him. He seemed to have no clear ideas on the subject. Being there as a guest, was it fair or courteous of me to cause him pain ?

(3) In our attempt to form a considered estimate of the value of the Tao Yuan, we have noticed two of its outstanding features—aristocracy and spiritualism. There remains a third, namely, its syncretism. In the Far East to-day Church history is repeating itself. The impulse, which in the first clash of Christian with non-Christian thought produced Gnosticism, is showing itself in China under other forms. To select the best from all religions—how alluring a notion to the philosophic mind ! It looks like taking a step above and beyond them all. And such it appears to be in the speculations of the Open Court. Not content with Shang Ti, the Supreme God of the ancient classics and now the Christians' God, these cultured gentlemen follow Laotzu back to the Original First Cause, albeit

substituting for his impersonal Tao a somewhat more personal Primeval Ancestor. Shang Ti they regard as the *Demiourgos*, both Maker and Preserver of the universe, subordinate to, yet hardly distinguishable from, the Original First Cause.

As regards the Five Religions, they are said to have been founded by men commissioned for the purpose by the Primeval Ancestor. The work of these Founders was of a temporary nature. According to Mr. Hou, in the near future the different churches and religions will be abolished, leaving behind only their spiritual essence, which is the Tao. When that happens, all men will have accepted the Tao, and thus all will have ceased from their evil ways.

"Do you believe," I asked him, "that this consummation will take place soon?"

"Yes, comparatively soon," he said.

"Brigands going to bed villains, and awaking in the morning transformed into good men—is that what you mean?"

"Something like that," was Mr. Hou's optimistic rejoinder.

In all this syncretistic mixture Christianity is given a high place. Not that this is of much importance, since our religion is only regarded as one of a number, and God is conceived rather on the lines of Chinese philosophy than as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is of considerable importance, however, is the testimony of the Open Court to the fact that Christ is planted in the midst of the life of China. Such testimony is highly significant. A new witness has arisen to prove that the Tree, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, is at last firmly rooted in the soil of the Far East. Here we have a remarkable outcome of the long years of missionary sacrifice and service. Although each of the five great religions is

definitely Asiatic in its origin, only four of them would usually be recognized as belonging to Asia. For the mass of the people, *the* religion of all is still an exotic, a foreign bloom brought from Europe and America. In the eyes of very many of the sons of the East, the climate of their home-land does not suit the white man's imported plant. The soil and atmosphere, they think, are alike alien. Hence arises the value of the new movement, proving as it does that Christianity has now become indigenous in the mind and heart of China. With what joy therefore do we watch the dawn of a new era!

And yet how maimed and stunted must be the spiritual life, which depends for its sustenance upon miraculous communications in an obscure style of speech, intelligible only to the learned, if indeed even they can fathom its mysterious import! "An evil generation," said Jesus, "seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah."[1] In other words, the only miracle available is a foreigner of uncouth appearance preaching in a strange city, friendless and alone. And Nineveh repented—that is the crowning marvel.

Bidding good-bye to the Chinese mandarins and scholars, who thus persistently seek after a sign, let us in closing glance at a very different scene among some of those—the more religious half of the human race—against whom the doors of the Tao Yuan are shut. It is Monday, the day when women are admitted to the Tsinanfu Institute, the "Court of Wisdom Wide," which is the Extension Department of the Shantung Christian University. Crowding through the turnstile into the large exhibition halls, from city lane and country farm they come to see the famous sights. If there is mystery here, it is the mystery of

[1] Luke xi. 29.

science, intelligence, mercy and truth. Amazed are the housewives at the model village under glass, where the utmost artistic skill in colour and design has been brought to bear on every detail of the life-like group, in order to convince the unbelieving that it is possible to overcome dirt, mosquitoes and flies, and so keep down disease. Passing on, the poorly clad mothers exclaim in wonder at the steamships and the aeroplanes, and especially at the beautiful figures, dressed neatly in their proper costumes, of men and women of the various races of the world. Most moving of all is a splendid set, showing the activities of the Red Cross in the War, from "No man's land" at the trenches back to the evacuation hospitals in France, England and Africa. A lesson of this kind opens the eyes of even the thoughtless to a glimmer of the meaning of the Gospel of Love. After spending an hour or two chatting and laughing and gazing at these wonders, depicting a Christian civilization at its best, the blue-gowned crowds enter the preaching chapel, to which all the aisles of the Institute lead. Here a Chinese Biblewoman tells them of Jesus Christ, Who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden. . . ."[1]

And despite their brave gaiety the women are very weary. For in that jostling throng I did not observe a single person with unbound natural feet. What a picture of China's misery, in contrast to the freedom and enlightenment that follow the lifting up of Christ, the only Saviour of stricken humankind! Now we can understand in what way the Open Court falls short. Now we see why our faith is everywhere victorious. Our faith is a *Gospel* of glad tidings, and glad tidings for the *poor*.

[1] Matt. xi. 28.

CHAPTER IV

THE BASIS OF CONSERVATISM

CONFUCIANISM

We load the sacrificial stands
  Of wood and earthen ware,
The smell of burning southernwood
  Is heavy in the air.

It was our fathers' sacrifice,
  It may be they were eased.
We know no harm to come of it;
  It may be God is pleased.

HELEN WADDELL, *Lyrics from the Chinese.*
(Ode written about 1114 B.C.)

CHAPTER IV

THE BASIS OF CONSERVATISM

CONFUCIANISM

"ALL doctrines are good doctrines," is the rather undiscriminating compliment sometimes paid to us Christian preachers. Looking round on the farms and the busy thoroughfares of the Chinese people, Sunday and Saturday with hardly a break except at the New Year Festival holiday, there is little of religious observance to be seen, at least in their outdoor life. In an *Essay on the Civilizations of India, China and Japan*, a Cambridge scholar recorded his impressions of the Chinese thus: "At the first sight of these ugly, cheery, vigorous people I loved them. Their gaiety, as of children, their friendliness, their profound humanity, struck me from the first and remained with me to the last. I can imagine no greater contrast than that between their character, their institutions, their habits, and those of the Indians. The Chinese are, and always have been, profoundly secular, as the Indians are, and always have been, profoundly religious. It is true, of course, that the Chinese have had religion, as the Europeans have had it; Buddhism came to them from India as Christianity came to us from Judæa, and Taoism was an indigenous growth. They have had also saints and mystics, as Europe has had them. But Buddhism and Taoism have never suited the Chinese character any more than Christianity has

suited the European. . . . It was, and is, Confucianism with its rationalism, its scepticism, its stress on conduct, that expresses the Chinese spirit. Over India gleam the stars ; over China the sun shines." [1]

"Profoundly secular"—that certainly is, broadly speaking, the impression the Chinese give us, as compared, not only with their southern neighbours the Hindus, but also with their northern neighbours the Mongols. This judgment, however, needs to be qualified by another remark from the Cambridge scholar's pen : "The Chinese have been the most peaceable, and in many respects the most civilized people the world has seen." [2]

What part then does religion play in their lives ? The first thing to be noted is the distinction, real though not clearly defined, between the learned and the unlettered masses. Whatever kind of faith an educated man may be inclined to, his bent is likely to be towards the philosophical side of it. For the masses, on the other hand, in so far as they are religious, what counts is cultus, rites, worship. And here as everywhere, women form the stronghold of the faith. On the eighteenth of the fourth moon there occurs the annual fair at the Hill Temple overlooking Fakumen, a pleasant and yet painful sight. In the front quadrangle and scattered over the hillside below the temple gate multitudes of children and grown-ups are chaffering with the vendors of toys, sweetmeats and more solid articles. Above in one of the halls of the gods the gong is beaten by an old attendant as a brightly dressed lady, lighting a bundle of fragrant incense, places it with both hands in the ashes of the incense pot on the altar. Then kneeling in silence she bows several times with her head almost touching the floor. Rising she drops a few coppers in the offering

[1] Lowes Dickinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 44. [2] *Ibid.*

box and moves away without a word. So the routine goes on from hall to hall, according to the devotee's wish. The holiday crowds from the schools and shops jostle the worshippers. Police and soldiers stand on idle guard. No priests are visible. Our Christians gather a group anywhere they please, selling Gospels and proclaiming their message without let or hindrance.

More impressive than all else is the inscription on a tablet over the door of the central shrine, within which sits the benevolent Goddess of Mercy. The inscription is simply a thick horizontal stroke, the character for "one." Gazing at what seems a mystic symbol of unity, we cannot help wondering how the donor came to have it placed in the midst of the gods many and lords many—unity in the very centre of polytheistic worship. May we not construe this symbol of the one in the many as a picture of his country from the standpoint of a Chinese speculative thinker?

Whatever may be the conception of to-day, there is no doubt that five thousand years ago before the beginning of Chinese history there was the knowledge of one Supreme Deity, not by any means devoid of personality. In 2205 B.C. the Great Yü ascended the throne of China. Four days after his marriage he started forth to drain the empire of the waters of a disastrous flood. Giving an account of Yü's engineering labours, "one of his ministers says to him: 'O Emperor, Almighty God regarded you with favour, so that the Four Seas became yours, and you yourself the lord of all beneath the canopy of heaven.'"[1] Prior to the time of Yü, the Emperor Shun, one of the two pattern rulers of the Golden Age, revered by all subsequent ages, received the throne from Emperor Yao, the other pattern ruler, who had resigned in his favour. Shun began his reign in 2357 B.C. with

[1] Giles, *Confucianism and its Rivals*, p. 13.

" a solemn act of worship : ' He sacrificed specially, but with the ordinary forms, to Shang Ti ; sacrificed purely to the six objects of Honour ; offered their appropriate sacrifices to the hills and rivers, and extended his worship to the host of spirits.' " [1]

From those remote ages of the past, the Lord on High, Shang Ti—it is the name most commonly employed by Protestant Christians for God—has been acknowledged by the rulers of the land. His worship was so holy as to be confined to the emperor, the Son of Heaven, who also acted in the capacity of parent of the millions of his subjects, in giving expression of their obligations to the Lord on High. In Peking there is a large park containing the Altar of Heaven, a beautiful circular platform of white marble, open to the sky and bare of images of any kind, undoubtedly the most venerable structure upon earth. Here from time immemorial, once a year at the winter solstice, occurred the elaborate service, when the emperor himself knelt in the centre of the altar to worship Shang Ti. Not far away in a large furnace faced with green porcelain, a whole burnt-offering of a bullock was consumed. After the sacrifices had been offered, the solemn service was concluded with the petition that their smoke might ascend in a cloud of incense to Heaven.

The question next arises—To whom was the imperial worship directed ? What was meant by God ? Professor Giles of Cambridge, probably the most accomplished living sinologue, considers *Tien*, or " Heaven," which is the more usual term in the Confucian Classics, to be the proper equivalent of our word " God." That the term is not impersonal is shown in such sayings of Confucius as the following : " Heaven produced the virtue that is in me." " Wherein I have

[1] Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 25.

done wrong, may Heaven reject me." Whether Tien or Shang Ti is spoken of, the meaning is a supreme Power, personal and active, protecting and punishing kings and their subjects alike. Here is a verse from the *Book of Odes* —

> How great is God,
> The ruler of men below!
> How arrayed in terrors is God!
> Yet His will is often disregarded.
> God created the myriad people,
> Yet His ordinances are not relied upon.
> All men are good at birth,
> But not many remain so to the end.[1]

In his *History of Chinese Philosophy*, discussing the Chinese ideas about God, Dr. Suzuki says: "He was a quiet, deliberate, ethical power that discharged or exercised his function rather impassively. He never showed himself in the midst of fires, thunders or lightnings, to vent his personal ire upon the creatures below. The Chinese never caught a glimpse of their God. He was hidden far up in the azure skies, he could not be brought into immediate personal touch with mortals." [2] Since this is so, it is not to be wondered at that the conception of one Supreme Being, who was debarred from direct relations with the people, gradually dropped into the background of the Chinese mind, if it did not altogether fade away.

In order to throw light on the decline of the Chinese belief in God, it is advisable to glance briefly at some of the underlying principles of their traditional philosophy. From the earliest times speculation was distinguished by a mathematical turn, the oldest documents exhibiting certain arithmetical devices. The basis of the system, which has permeated the mind of China, educated or otherwise, is a dualism which

[1] Giles, *op. cit.*, p. 84. [2] Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

conceives the universe as the product of two principles, positive and negative. *Yang* stands for Heaven, Light, Vigour, Male, Monad. *Yin* implies Earth (the antithesis of Heaven), Darkness, Quiescence, Female, Duad. The former is associated with odd numbers, the latter with even numbers. Everything in the world, man included, is considered to be compounded of *Yang* and *Yin* elements. The oldest and most venerated book in the Confucian Canon, the *Book of Changes,* the meaning of which remains an unsolved puzzle, has for its nucleus the famous Eight Diagrams coming down from the legendary monarch Fu Hsi, who constructed them from some markings divinely revealed to him on the back of a tortoise. Of the *Book of Changes* Confucius remarked : " If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the *Book of Changes,* and then I might come to be without great faults." [1]

As a final explanation of the universe, the human mind cannot readily admit a dualism, even the natural rhythmic swing of the world's pendulum, exemplified in these ancient ideas. In the eleventh century Choutzu, who has been called " the first systematic thinker of China," [2] worked out what is regarded as the distinctively Chinese philosophy. Beginning with the " Great Ultimate " or " Limit," having no origin and therefore the grand original cause of all things, the division into *Yang* and *Yin* occurs in this way. " The grand cause moves," says Choutzu, " thus producing *Yang.* Having reached the limit—it rests. Resting it produces *Yin.* Having rested to the limit, again it moves. Once moving, once resting ; one state being conditioned by the other." [3] From the dual principles were evolved the Five Elements, the constituent essences of manifested

[1] *Analects,* vii. 16. [2] Carus, *Chinese Philosophy,* p. 28. [3] *Ibid.,* p. 29.

nature, Metal, Air, Fire, Water and Wood. Like the four elements of Greek philosophy, these are considered the fundamental forms of matter. Finally from the five elements " the myriads of things through change originate." " Thus change and transformation are infinite." [1]

A century later, Chu Hsi, the orthodox classical commentator, though he accepted the conclusions of his great predecessor, approached the problem of cosmogony from a somewhat different angle. His particular categories are Law and Air, or, using the language of physics as a rough approximation, Force and Matter. Unequal in importance, the two are always found in combination. " That which perceives is the immaterial principle of the mind; and that which enables it to perceive is the intelligence of the primary matter." [2] Chu Hsi identified his law or immaterial principle with the great extreme or ultimate of Choutzu. " At the very first there was nothing, but merely this immaterial principle." [3]

Lest you should be inclined to smile at such conjuring with abstract terms, perhaps I may remind you of a modern Western giant in the history of philosophy. Hegel's well-known starting-point was the triad—Pure Being, which may be stated in negative form as Nothing, the two issuing in Becoming. Moreover Kant, the father of modern idealism, laid down his formal *a priori* categories which remain true of any possible world, thus partially resembling the Chinese thinker's immaterial principle. And the mention of Kant serves to draw attention to another link of connection between the Eastern sage and the Western. For both were chiefly concerned not with metaphysics but with ethics. Chu Hsi wrote: " Should anyone

[1] Carus, *op. cit.*, p. 29. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 34. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

ask, What is the great extreme? I would say the great extreme is simply the principle of extreme goodness and extreme perfection—the exemplified virtue of everything that is extremely good and extremely perfect in heaven and earth, men and things." [1]

Owing in large measure to the influence of these able thinkers of the Sung Dynasty in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it has come to pass that now Tien, i.e. "Heaven" or "God," has lost its personal quality and is identified with Natural Law. Such is the judgment of Professor Tsu, of St. John's College, Shanghai, one of the leading theologians of China. "To the Confucianists," he says, "the question of God and man's personal relationship to Him is a dead issue, for they are not interested in religion." [2] If that is so, how are we to account for the all-pervading influence of Confucianism? One thing at any rate is clear: unlike Christianity and Mohammedanism, this influence was not due to any teaching about God.

Why some religions have spread so widely is a question not easily answered. In the case of a creed that has become part of the very air one breathes in a country containing a fourth of the world's population, the question is of the deepest interest. For ages the schoolboys have been drilled, not in the stories of bloodshed and battles which choke the histories of European nations, but in handbooks of filial conduct and social welfare, difficult indeed to comprehend, though in respect of difficulty we should not forget that among ourselves the *Shorter Catechism* [3] is regarded as a textbook for the young. A strenuous examination on the nine Classics marked for many centuries the entrance to the civil service, furnishing to successful candidates the equivalent of university degrees.

[1] Carus, *op. cit.*, p. 35. [2] *China To-day*, p. 85.
[3] The *Shorter Catechism* is the standard manual of Christian doctrine for children, in use among Anglo-Saxon Presbyterians.

Whence, one asks in astonishment, did the Chinese reverence for literary culture come? Was it due to Confucius, or was he only the most signal product of this remarkable national characteristic? You will not be surprised if I humbly confess that I do not know. Many zealous Hindus in order to avoid crushing small insects sweep them aside, out of regard for life. Similarly there are exemplary Chinese who gather up and consign to the flames scraps of written or printed paper, lest the script by being trodden on should be defiled. During the Boxer Rising my belongings were looted. On my return one book from my small library was carefully returned to me unsoiled. It was the most costly book I possessed, Giles's *Chinese-English Dictionary*, a big heavy tome, saved from the wreck by someone who respected the printed Chinese text. That an almost intuitive knowledge of the Confucian culture in its main outlines at least has permeated all classes may be inferred from this curious fact: it is a gross insult to tell anyone, as is often done in a rage, that he has "forgotten the eight" virtues! Our vocabulary of abuse has a theological colour, theirs an ethical bent.

Let us turn then to consider what sort of man was the Sage whose sway is undisputed among four hundred millions of people, in intelligence equal to any other race on the earth. Born in 551 B.C., during a period of feudal strife before the creation of a strong central authority, Confucius was a child of his father's old age. He was a sedate boy, fond of playing at postures of ceremony. After his father's death, his mother had to struggle with poverty. It was then he acquired, as he afterwards acknowledged, his ability in many things. At nineteen he married, but later he separated from his wife, his only reason being that he might have more leisure and opportunity for study.

Appointed to a small office as keeper of Government stores, he said: "My accounts must be all right; that's all I have to care about." Mencius refers to this employment "in illustration of his doctrine that the superior man may at times take office simply for the relief of his poverty, but must in such a case confine himself to places of small emolument, and aim at nothing but the discharge of his humble duties." [1]

In his twenty-second year he commenced his labours as a teacher, having for his pupils young men who wished to increase their knowledge of the history and doctrines of the past. "However small the fee that was given, he never refused his instructions; but he did require an ardent desire for improvement." [2] The exacting nature of his method is shown by the dictum: "When I have presented one corner of a subject to anyone, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson." In later years the number of his disciples reached three thousand or thereabouts, of whom seventy-two formed an inner circle. His mother died when he was twenty-three, and he "mourned for her with the bitterest grief."

It was not till he was fifty-one years old that, through his appointment to the chief magistracy of a town in his native state of Lu, he had a real opportunity of submitting his teachings on government to the test of practice. A marvellous reformation of the people took place, and the reformer became State Minister of Crime. "There was no necessity to put the penal laws in execution. No offenders showed themselves." [3] So great was the alteration in the condition of Lu, that the ruler of a neighbouring state, fearing Lu might become too powerful, sent a present to the governing marquis consisting of a company of

[1] Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 125. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

singing girls and a troop of fine horses. The marquis fell into the trap. Confucius and his lessons were neglected. "It is time for you to leave," advised one of his disciples. By short stages he slowly went away: no message of recall came.

For thirteen years Confucius travelled from one feudal state to another, "always hoping to meet with a ruler who would adopt his counsels, and always disappointed. . . . Repeatedly . . . he and his companions were in straits, and even in peril of their lives. Once they were assailed by a mob. . . . While the others were alarmed, he calmly said, 'After the death of King Wen, was not the cause of truth lodged in me? If Heaven had wished to let this cause perish, then I should not have had such a relation to it. While Heaven does not let the cause of truth perish, what can the men of Kwang do to me?'" [1]

Broken in spirit after years of fruitless effort, the wanderer returned to his native Lu at the advanced age of sixty-nine. He was respectfully received, and he devoted the last five years of his life to such scholarly pursuits as the collection and arrangement of ancient poetry and ceremonies, the reform of music, and the careful study of the *Book of Changes*. The leather thongs of his copy of this enigmatical classic were thrice worn out. Early one morning he got up and, moving about near his door, he murmured:—

> The great mountain must crumble;
> The strong beam must break;
> And the wise man wither away like a plant.

Entering the house he spoke to a disciple about a dream he had had the night before, and added: "No intelligent monarch arises; there is not one in the empire that will make me his master. My time is

[1] Legge, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

come to die." [1] Whereupon he took to his couch and after seven days passed away. His disciples buried him with extraordinary pomp; many of them built huts and remained near his grave for the long space of three years, mourning as if for a father. Despite the unstinted affection of his faithful disciples, the great philosopher's end was melancholy. During his lifetime punctilious attention to his public duties had brought him scanty visible reward. His teaching was in fact rejected by the rulers whom he endeavoured to instruct. Had it not been for the zeal of Mencius some two centuries later, the name and fame of the Sage might have had a very different history.

In the *Analects* or *Memorabilia* [2] of Confucius there is a chapter which describes his personal habits. For example: "He required his sleeping dress to be half as long again as his body. When staying at home he used thick furs of the fox or the badger." "When fasting he thought it necessary to have his clothes brightly clean and made of linen cloth." "He did not eat meat which was not cut properly, nor that which was served without its proper sauce." "He was never without ginger when he ate. He did not eat much." "If his mat was not straight he did not sit on it." "In bed he did not lie like a corpse." "When any of his friends died, if he had no relations who could be depended on for the necessary offices, he would say, 'I will bury him.'" "When the prince sent him a gift of undressed meat, he would have it cooked, and offer it to the spirits of his ancestors."

These reminiscences of his attached followers, detailed and intimate as they are, throw less light on

[1] Legge, *The Life and Teaching of Confucius*, p. 88.

[2] "In a symposium on 'the hundred best books,' made by a daily paper in Tokyo in 1909, the *Analects* of Confucius received easily the largest number of votes."—Cave, *Living Religions of the East*, p. 193 (note).

the Master's personality than his own summary of his career :

> At 15, my mind was bent on learning.
> At 30, I stood firm.
> At 40, I had no doubts.
> At 50, I knew the will of God.
> At 60, I could trust my ears.
> At 70, I could follow my heart's desires without transgression.[1]

Of his home life the authentic information is scanty. Like many another ancient philosopher, his opinion of women was not very high. Whether or not he divorced his wife is a moot question. When she died their son kept weeping aloud for her beyond the prescribed period. Accordingly Confucius sent him a message that his sorrow should be restrained. The obedient son then dried his tears.

With regard to the teaching of Confucius preserved for us chiefly in the *Analects*, and in a secondary sense in *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*, there are no two opinions as to its permanent value. There are however varying interpretations of that teaching. What is perhaps the commonest view places in the forefront the prime virtue of filial piety, with its complement, ancestor worship. Let us examine these two correlated ideas. For filial piety the Chinese ideograph, called *hsiao*, is made up of a couple of symbols or pictures, an old man above and a son below. The original conception therefore is that of a son supporting his father. A full description of the duty is given by the Sage. " The service which a filial son does to his parents is as follows : In his general conduct to them he manifests the utmost reverence ; in his nourishing of them, his endeavour is to give them the utmost pleasure ; when they are

[1] *Analects*, ii. 4.

ill, he feels the greatest anxiety; in mourning for them (dead) he exhibits every demonstration of grief; in sacrificing to them, he displays the utmost solemnity. When a son is complete in these five things, (he may be pronounced) able to serve his parents." [1]

Resembling the other aspects of the meagre teaching of Confucius on religion, his attitude towards the future life was conventional. Of the existence of the spirits of the dead he did not care to speak. "While you are not able to serve men," said he, "how can you serve their spirits?" "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?" There is in these well-known dicta an agnostic turn, which is also possibly indicated in this further statement from the *Analects*, that he "sacrificed to the spirits as if they were present."

"As if they were present." The modern practice of ancestor worship is deeply tainted with the Taoist fancy that the dead are in purgatory and will injure their relatives unless deliverance is secured for them. The Taoist priests, as Dr. Legge says, "fleece" the people "in order to effect that object, and are wonderfully ingenious in finding occasions to wheedle or frighten their victims out of their money." [2] For the better-educated Confucianists the case is different. With them the materialistic explanation due to Chu Hsi is current. According to this theory, "at death, the breath leaves the body and is scattered and mingled with the universal air. But it is capable of coming together again at the time of ancestral worship, on the law that the like responds to the like. That is, the descendants who conduct the worship have the same breath in them that once animated their ancestors. When the descendants in sincerity and concentration of spirit beckon the ancestral spirit to return

[1] Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 72. [2] Legge, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

to the house, on such occasions the scattered spirit is capable of assembling again and returning. However, this 're-formation' of the scattered spirit into a unity is only temporary, being held together only by the intense concentration of the worshipper's mind during the worship. And so it is impossible for the ancestral spirit to unite and reincarnate itself in a body and thus have a second life, such as the Buddhists teach." [1] By this bold compromise between faith and materialism did Chu Hsi strive to expound ancestor worship.

The view that the central theme of Confucius is filial piety has been effectively challenged. Certain it is that ancestor worship did not originate with the Sage, and has no special connection with his system. In a series of articles recently published under the title, "The Confucian Theory of Moral and Religious Education and its Bearing on the Future Civilization of China," a Christian Chinese scholar urges that the aim of Confucius was, for the individual, to be an incarnation of *Jen*, or Love, and for society, to live the normal life. Or, in other words, the Sage's purpose was not to produce an ideal *son*, but rather an ideal *man* in all departments of life. Among many descriptions of *Jen* in the *Analects* here is one: "*Jen* is self-control and reverence. When self-control and reverence obtain, the world is going to *Jen*." [2] Dr. Legge's translation, however, reads: "To subdue one's self and return to propriety is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him." The highest good then is *Jen*, and *Jen* is gained by careful attention to duty, walking in the middle of the road, and living a normal life. On this theory

[1] *China To-day*, art. by Professor Tsu, pp. 79, 80.
[2] *The Chinese Recorder*, December 1923, art. by Z. K. Zia, p. 724.

the superior man, far from being a superman, is in reality the "standardized man, a product of the Golden Mean." Here he is: "Looked at from a distance, he appears stern. When approached, he is mild. When he is heard to speak, his language is firm and decided."

Whatever divergence of opinion there may be with regard to the pivot of Confucius' moral doctrine for the individual, it is certain that the Sage looked on man chiefly as a citizen, a political being, stationed in a family which is to be held responsible for his good conduct. The Sage's dream of the Chinese Empire was a visible heaven upon earth, the emperor, the only son of heaven, exercising by Divine right dominion over all the earth. Transgression causes evil consequences, even in nature. But "a return to the right path restores the perturbed harmony." [1] With the object of strengthening those in power by his principle of authority and subordination, Confucius "never thought of a legal check to tyrannical excesses." [2] Education and example are the remedies for wrong-doing; only the few can acquire education, but "if these few are the officials, they will, besides governing well, also furnish the examples necessary for the common people." [3]

Up till the founding of the government schools in recent years the first of the classics to be memorized by all schoolboys was a brief manual entitled *The Great Learning*. This little ethical treatise, meant principally for the training of the sovereign, while not excluding his subjects, is composed of a Confucian text, in length resembling a chapter of only seven verses in our Bible, followed by the commentary of a disciple. The essence of the main text is contained

[1] Faber, *Confucianism*, p. 7. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[3] Couling, *Encyclopædia Sinica*, p. 126.

in the following sentences : " What the Great Learning teaches, is—to illustrate illustrious virtue ; to renovate the people ; and to rest in the highest excellence. . . . The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. . . . Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. . . . From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides." Despite the formality, surely a noble utterance ! Certainly this way of the superior man is a source of delight and a fount of excellence to the orderly sons of Han. Throughout the country in the government schools to-day a regular subject of study is *hsiu shen*, the cultivation of the person, the building up of the life, or, as we should put it, the science of moral conduct.[1]

Unfolding the contents of goodness, they include the five cardinal virtues—kindness, rectitude, decorum, wisdom and sincerity—which correspond to the five elements in nature. These virtues are to be exhibited in the five human relations—ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, friend and friend. Apart from the subordina-

[1] Although religion is not taught in these schools, our Moukden College Middle School, which has the privilege of government registration, is permitted a free hand for Christian instruction, as taking the place of moral science.

tion involved in a patriarchal society, the worst defect of the ethical doctrine concerns the position of women. Confucius demanded the strict separation of the sexes, forbidding social intercourse between them. Marriage was regarded as a duty to the ancestors. Young men and women should neither speak to nor look at one another; hence the horror at the thought of a man asking a woman to be his wife. Regarding the last of the five relations, the teaching is of such a thorough kind that Dr. Legge is unstinted in its praise: "I do not know," he says, "any other scheme of society which gives so prominent a place to friendship." [1]

The highest point in Confucius' system of morality is his statement of the golden rule, not in the positive form of the Gospel, but in a negative form. "Tsze-Kung once asked him if there were one word which would serve as a rule of conduct for all the life; and he replied, 'Is not reciprocity such a word?—What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.'" [2] The word translated here by Dr. Legge, "reciprocity," has also been rendered, "be generous," suggesting "the idea of following one's better nature," [3] man's nature being "the distinguishing endowment given him by Heaven or God." Thus in the Far East was evolved an ethical philosophy comparable to, but far wider in its range of influence than, the lofty teaching of the Stoics a couple of centuries later in Greece. In a brilliant booklet called *The Story of a Chinese Oxford Movement*, Mr. Ku Hung Ming, a learned Confucian scholar, who is also a graduate of Edinburgh University, says that Confucius' "method of stopping a social or political evil and reforming the world is by each individual gaining or acquiring moral force,

[1] Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 107.
[2] Legge, *op. cit.*, pp. 137, 138.
[3] Soothill, *The Three Religions of China*, p. 30.

through a life of self-respect and integrity. . . . This . . . is the force, the only force upon which the Chinese nation will have to depend, in order to save their ancient civilization, the best that is in that civilization, from the destructive forces of the materialistic civilization of the nations of modern Europe." [1]

It is hard to be enthusiastic about the Sage of China : it is easy to respect him. After all, there is nothing necessarily pompous about the "superior man," [2] the cultivated gentleman, the embodiment of the Chinese national ideal, for such is their greatest teacher understood to be. Much more readily does one's heart warm to him after long experience of the extraordinary courtesy, restraint and patience, which characterize the Chinese race. Always the "foreign-kingdom-man," if he has eyes to see, admits to himself his deficiency in manners and in something more. We pride ourselves on our straightforwardness, our sincerity. They will acknowledge our good qualities. But watch a group of friends halting before any ordinary door, and laughingly, but of set purpose, pressing each other to go through. Time is consumed ; they all hang back, until either the person obviously first in social standing, or merely some daring spirit, steps forward to lead the way. We outsiders never seem truly to learn the inwardness of such little comedies, any more than we comprehend the correct places in rooms where guests should sit. The foreigner is rough, uncouth, devoid of the grace that seems to belong naturally to the multitudes who have sat at the feet of Confucius. Perhaps the secret may lie in submission to law, outward and inward, a reverence for the

[1] Ku Hung Ming, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[2] "Superior man" does not quite represent the Chinese expression which is translated *honnête homme* by M. Granet. In classical Greek the equivalent term is καλὸς κἀγαθός, a perfect gentleman, a man as he should be.

heritage above them and around them, into which they have been born.

Ceremoniousness is a natural outcome of reverence, and "reverence," it has been said, "is, as in the Old Testament ('the fear of the Lord'), the word which most adequately expresses the religious frame of mind." [1] Upon such a frame of mind has the whole social fabric of China been built up—a fabric which partly for good and partly for evil has held together for thousands of years with great tenacity, and is only now showing signs of giving way. The rampant individualism of the West allows, indeed, a far wider scope for variety and originality of personal development, whereas in China the clothing, the houses, the carts, the ploughs, the brush-pens, the essay-styles, the hundred surnames, the yearly festivals, the wretched roads—all follow the tradition of the fathers, or rather did so until the West began battering at the door. The observance of the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue has been too rigid, the conservatism too deadening. The normal life, with its motto "Safety First," cannot be the triumphant life. Nevertheless we who believe that God the Father appointed the bounds of the peoples' habitation, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, rejoice because He did not leave Himself without a witness, many witnesses, in that vast Eastern land.

"What is humanity?" was a question put to the Master whom China has chosen for two millenniums to follow. The Master answered, "To love men." "What is knowledge?" The Master said, "To know men." And finally, the climax of his doctrine, a seed of the eternal truth, is the saying of Confucius: "He who desires to know men must of necessity first know God."

A seed left barren and sterile by the Sage.

[1] G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i, p. 29.

CHAPTER V

IS GOODNESS NATURAL TO MAN?

CONFUCIANISM AND ANIMISM

God "was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy He devised that all things should be as like Himself as they could be."

PLATO, *Timæus.*

Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,
And hast forgotten God that gave thee birth.

Deuteronomy.

CHAPTER V

IS GOODNESS NATURAL TO MAN?

CONFUCIANISM AND ANIMISM

THE most famous province in China is situated at the north-east corner. Its fame is not due to the dense population industriously cultivating every inch of available soil between the mountains and the sand, nor yet to the tallness of its stalwart sons, who furnished the bulk of the Chinese Labour Corps in France. The province of Shantung holds the premier place, because within its borders were born the two Sages, Confucius, known as the "Most Holy," and Mencius, the "Second Holy One." Of the new religious movements, two of the more remarkable began in Tsinanfu, the provincial capital. And we may add that close by the walls of that city we find to-day the artistic buildings of one of the best seats of learning in the whole country, the Shantung Christian University.

In the spring of 1923 I set out on a pilgrimage to the Temple and the Grave of Confucius at Chüfu in Southern Shantung. On the train a Chinese stranger, happening to hear me making inquiry about the road from the station, offered to be my companion, since he was going to his home at Chüfu; I gladly took the risk of accepting his offer. We slept overnight in the same cheap inn on wooden beds covered with millet-stalks. Twenty miles southward of our destination the brigands had stopped and sacked the Blue Express not long

before, and were then holding their foreign captives to ransom in their fastnesses.

Jolting in the sunshine on the shaft of a Peking cart, with my friend occupying the superior place inside, I noticed to the left of the road a long wall. "What is that?" I asked the carter. "That is the Most Holy Grove," he replied. By this he meant the wide park, thirteen miles in circumference, containing within it the most honoured grave in China. Arrived at the small city of Chüfu, where lives Duke Kung, the present head of the family descended through twenty-four centuries from the Sage,[1] my friend and I had breakfast in an inn outhouse, a dark room devoid of windows. Then we walked together to the great temple.

Wandering through one courtyard after another, we saw the beautiful buildings enshrining the memory not only of Confucius himself, but also of his father, his mother, his wife, and five generations of his ancestors. Under a glass cover is the stump of a tree supposed to have been planted by the Sage. A side room is piled up with various utensils, the look of which does not seem quite to bear out the attendant's assertion that they had been used by Confucius. A solitary wall is pointed to as having had the classics hidden in it, when in 213 B.C. the Emperor Chin buried alive several hundred scholars and ordered all existing books to be burnt, except those on medicine, divination and agriculture.

The main temple, a single storey seventy-four feet in height, has a portico of carved marble pillars; elaborate and beautiful decorations, including the nine-clawed dragon, ornament the ceiling inside. Occupying the central place facing the door is a stately image of Confucius. In front of the image a vertical

[1] The family name is Kung; Confucius is a latinized form of Kung-fu-tzu, or the philosopher Kung.

tablet has the inscription, "The Divine Seat of the Perfect Sage, the Ancient Teacher Kung." Above the shrine hangs a large horizontal tablet, the gift of the Emperor Kwang Hsü, with the words, well known as specially applied to Confucius, "The Teacher and Example for Ten Thousand Generations." Side-altars with images of Mencius and other leading disciples are placed to the right and left. And in front of the principal shrine is an incense pot, handed down from the Sage himself, containing incense which is kept continually burning.

The grave is a simple mound in a shady park, connected with the city by a long avenue of rugged old pines. The temple with its solemn grandeur and the grave in its sylvan peace are lonely spots. No crowds of cheerful pilgrims ever throng the courts and glades. No choirs of priests and acolytes chant daily prayers in the dim halls. The Sage sits in his eminence, alone. And perhaps the most impressive sight of all was just behind the main building, where an unassuming wooden tablet stands in a large empty hall. It is the temple to his wife, whom in her lifetime the Sage had treated with neglect.

Although since A.D. 57 sacrifices have been offered to the Sage, it was only in 1908 that the Manchus, when nearly at the end of their rule, elevated him to the rank of a god. Throughout the vast Republic bloodless sacrifices of oxen, sheep and pigs, are offered twice a year in the presence of government officials at the Confucian temples in every city. Such at any rate is understood to be the custom, although Confucianism has not the special legal sanction of the state. At the present time the animals are usually not burnt, but afterwards eaten. During the autumnal sacrifice in Chüfu a representative of the President of the Republic goes to worship there.

About one hundred years after the death of Confucius, there was born in 372 B.C. the man whose genius placed the doctrines of the Sage beyond dispute, and whose work on social ethics is the fourth of the classical "Four Books." Mencius lived to the age of eighty-four and devoted his life to the propagation of Confucianism, but with certain changes of emphasis, the most remarkable advance in political theory being his doctrine that rulers are of less importance than their subjects. Mencius' defence of revolution was widely quoted at the time of the overthrow of the Manchu Empire in 1911. For our purpose what merits special attention is his doctrine of human nature, which has been called "his one original contribution to Confucian teaching." [1] But before coming to its consideration, let us notice a few facts about the life of the "Second Holy One."

His father having died when he was three years old, he was brought up by her whose name has been handed down in Chinese history as the model mother. "Every schoolboy knows that the mother of Mencius 'thrice' removed her dwelling for the sake of her son." [2] At first living near a cemetery, the child amused himself by playing at funeral rites. "This is no place for my son," said his mother, and so she removed to a house close by the market. Here the boy naturally imitated the buyers and sellers, acting the shopkeeper. Not wishing to develop her son's trading instincts, the mother once more changed her home, this time settling close by a school. When the child now began to copy the deportment of the scholars towards their teacher, his happy mother said, "This is the place for my son." Accordingly Mencius went to school. One day returning from school tired of

[1] Couling, *Encyc. Sinica*, p. 348.
[2] Soothill, *The Three Religions of China*, p. 36.

his studies, he came to his mother, who as usual was busy weaving for their support. She looked up from her loom and inquired how he was getting on. He answered in a careless way, "Oh, well enough," whereupon his mother drew a knife across the warp of the cloth she was weaving, slashing the web in two. The astonished boy knelt down and begged to know what this strange action meant. Then his grieved mother told him that education was a slow daily process like the weaving of cloth with single threads, and that he was losing his time as she had ruined her web. It was a lesson the boy could never forget.

In manhood Mencius spent his days like his great master, partly in teaching a number of disciples, but chiefly in visiting the rulers of the feudal states of that degenerate time. In his efforts at practical reform his wisdom and sincerity of speech met with no more success than did the similar efforts of Confucius. Almost always using the word, *Tien*, or "Heaven," for God, Mencius traced calamities and blessings to God's will. "When the empire is well governed," he said, "right prevails, and good men triumph over the wicked; when it is badly governed, might prevails, and the strong triumph over the weak. Such are the dispensations of God. But those who obey God are saved, while those who disobey perish." This last couplet taken from the ancient Book of History has passed into the proverbial speech of the people.

When the philosopher's mother died, the funeral ceremonies were on so grand a scale that he was much criticized. His defence was that "the superior man will not for all the world be niggardly to his parents." "In accordance with the custom revived by Confucius," he "retired from the court for three years to mourn his mother." [1]

[1] Allan, *Heroes of Cathay*, p. 24.

One of his finest utterances was this: "I like fish and I also like bears' paws. If I cannot have the two together, I will let the fish go and take the bears' paws. So I like life, and I also like righteousness. If I cannot keep the two together, I will let life go and choose righteousness." China's Second Sage was a contemporary of Plato, Aristotle and Zeno, during the "Great Age of Greece." If we place Mencius among these renowned philosophers, "he can," according to Dr. Legge. "look them in the face. He does not need to hide a diminished head." But after all, his quality is perhaps best revealed in that deep saying of his, which to us sounds so familiar: "The ideal man is he who does not lose his child's heart."

In his *Sermons on Human Nature* Bishop Butler announced that man was made for virtue as a watch for keeping time. Whether this doctrine is or is not a just statement of the facts, there is no doubt that it expresses accurately the view of Confucius, which was elaborated by his successor. *The Doctrine of the Mean*, than which "few works have been held in higher esteem by the intellectual classes of China," has for its first paragraph these three sentences: "What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature; an accordance with this nature is called the Path of duty; the regulation of this path is called Instruction." Such is the rendering of the distinguished missionary who spent so many years in bringing the knowledge of the Chinese Classics within the reach of English readers, Dr. James Legge, the first Professor of Chinese in Oxford. Another method of interpretation appears in Ku Hung Ming's translation, in which the book is named *The Conduct of Life, or the Universal Order of Confucius.* It begins thus: "The ordinance of God is what we call the law of our being. To fulfil the law of our being is what we call the moral law.

The moral law when reduced to a system is what we call religion." With regard to the remarkable phrasing of this last proposition, it is worth while to observe that the final word in the classical text is also used in the expression, "Christ Religion," or "Christian Church," and means both instruction and religion.

What we are concerned with just now however is the clearness and force with which Mencius drove home his theory of human goodness. Of the nature of man he said: "From the feelings proper to it, it is constituted for the practice of what is good. This is what I mean in saying that the nature is good. If men do what is not good, the blame cannot be imputed to their natural powers."

Again, "Benevolence is man's mind, and righteousness is man's path. How lamentable is it to neglect the path and not pursue it, to lose this mind and not know to seek it again! When men's fowls and dogs are lost, they know to seek for them again, but they lose their mind, and do not know to seek for it. The great end of learning is nothing else but to seek for the lost mind." Speaking of the four principles, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom, he said: "These four principles as naturally belong to a man as his four limbs. Since we have them in ourselves, let us know how to give to all of them their full development and completion. They are not infused into us from without. We are certainly furnished with them."

Here then is the core of the Chinese philosophy of religion. If it is a satisfactory theory, what need is there for religion at all, in its proper sense of the service of God? According to Confucius and Mencius, morality of a high order is natural to man, and will mark his conduct, provided he receives sufficient instruction. The theory is both very ancient and very

modern. Not only has it been inculcated, as we have seen, with vigour and sincerity by the teachers honoured in the Far East, but it also belongs to the Greece of Socrates and Aristotle, the latter of whom has been called "the prophet of the natural man." Above both the Chinese Sages, indeed, must be placed the martyr for the truth, who when on trial for his life, declared before his accusers: "God has commanded me to examine men in oracles, and in dreams, and in every way in which His will was ever declared to man. . . . I cannot hold my peace, for that would be to disobey God." [1] Highly as we must respect Confucius, nothing in his life equals Socrates' "burning faith in God and Right." [2] Nevertheless, the identification of virtue with knowledge is in some sense characteristic of both.

The theory is also very modern. Salomon Reinach, the French savant, whose hope is in the spread of scientific education, says in his well-known work, *Orpheus*, that "the religion of social duty is all-sufficient" for "cultured Europeans." [3]

To inquire into the difficult theme of the relation between goodness and truth, between virtue and knowledge, is scarcely relevant to the plan of these lectures. It is on the other hand very pertinent to ask ourselves the no less difficult question—In what connection does religion stand to morality? Even if we should fail to arrive at any very exhaustive conclusion on a matter upon which our thoughts will be exercised as long as we live on earth, and doubtless much longer, we can at least find our bearings through an attempt to understand the problem. First, to quote Sir J. G. Frazer: "No man is religious who does not govern his conduct in some measure by the fear

[1] Church, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, p. xxvi.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. lxxxix. [3] Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 62.

or love of God. On the other hand, mere practice, divested of all religious belief, is also not religion. Two men may behave in exactly the same way, and yet one of them may be religious and the other not. If the one acts from the love or fear of God, he is religious; if the other acts from the love or fear of man, he is moral or immoral according as his behaviour comports or conflicts with the general good. Hence belief and practice, or, in theological language, faith and works, are equally essential to religion, which cannot exist without both of them." [1]

That statement is precise and unequivocal. And yet the problem is by no means simple. Whatever be their temperament or training, Christian preachers usually find their main difficulty for their flocks and for themselves in linking sound belief along with sincerity and strength of character. Doubtful theology, as we all know, often accompanies remarkable excellence of daily life, while on the other hand many of us are painfully aware of very poor ethical results arising out of a really first-rate creed.

Nothing in the teaching of Confucius corresponds to the experience of Israel or ancient Babylon, moral precepts being delivered to Moses by Jehovah, or to Hammurabi by the sun-god, Shamash, "judge of heaven and earth." "The sanctions of law," says Dr. Estlin Carpenter, "on which national welfare and social order depended could be no other than Divine." [2] So was it in the ancient days in Asia, East and West. By the sixth century B.C., for the mind of the Chinese Sage, the support of religion in human affairs was not felt to be an urgent need. At the same period the great soul of Gotama the Indian saint was in sore travail, searching for redemption. The deliverance

[1] Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (one volume edition), p. 50.
[2] Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 130.

he found was proclaimed to the world in the form of a law of life without either sanction or recognition of the Divine.

It will help to throw light on our problem of the bond between faith and works if we now consider a type of religion poles apart from the Confucian ethical system, and yet in common practice inextricably bound up with it. I refer to the animistic cultus of the masses of the Chinese people, a form of religion so multifarious in its rites and customs that it is well-nigh incomprehensible to us strangers from the West. The main point to keep in mind is that from the earliest times, as has been shown, the people were shut out from any share in the ceremonies with which the Supreme Ruler was honoured, the emperor alone being sufficiently exalted to approach him. Hence it followed that the multitudes restricted their worship to the minor deities of the hierarchy above, choosing those celestial beings most concerned with their particular occupations and needs. Shopkeepers and artisans, for example, reverence the god of wealth. At the edge of a village by the roadside there is usually a small shrine, perhaps four to eight feet in height, dedicated to the "Lord of the Soil," the Baal who protects that particular neighbourhood, and to whom the tillers of the ground offer homage. Let us endeavour, by means of two illustrations dealing respectively with the home and the farm, to peer into the heart of this complicated animistic faith.

Entering a Chinese house, one is almost certain to find a coloured paper picture pasted on the wall near the fireplace, which is an opening at the level of the floor below the fixed food-pot. The picture represents the "Kitchen God," whose responsible function it is to leave his post of observation a week before the end of the year and proceed to heaven to hand in his

report of the doings of the household for the year. To assist him in giving a favourable report, his lips may be smeared with sweet malt before he starts. On the last night of the dying year when China declines to go to bed, some members of the happy household are diligently preparing scores or hundreds of small pork dumplings for the crowning holiday of New Year's Day, while others are attending to the less interesting details of the reception of his excellency the king of the kitchen on his return from the long journey to the powers on high. To light his way back, it is usual to place a red paper lantern on the top of a tall pole in the yard. A new picture sheet then replaces the old, remaining for a lunar year until the ritual like clockwork is due to be repeated once again.

Just as in a Protestant city of the West there is little or nothing of a spectacular nature, except on Sundays, to suggest to a passing traveller the religious observances of the people, so in a Chinese town, apart from the New Year season and a few other temple festivals, the outsider even living in their midst seldom sees the practices of the popular faith thrust under his notice. Sometimes indeed it is otherwise. In an agricultural country where rain is an indispensable boon, drought arouses the dormant sense of dependence on the Superior Powers. During some weeks of the month of August 1924 rain had been very scarce in the neighbourhood of Fakumen. Orders were accordingly passed round the town from the local Guild of Agriculture that prayers for rain were to be conducted on three successive days. During this time no meat was allowed to be sold in the town. Each business firm was expected to send a representative to take part in the processions, unless conscientious scruples interfered. Except in the case of Christians or Mohammedans, a tablet with yellow paper was

displayed at every shop-front, bearing the proper designation of the Dragon King, whose special duty is the control of rain. Beside the tablet stood a vessel of water into which a branch of green willow was dipped.

Here is a prayer for rain, composed in Chinese words of one syllable, four words to the line :—

The antelopes are leaping,
The clouds move and the rain appears,
The rain is falling copiously,
Great rain comes in season,
Heaven sends down great rain,
Great rain is drenching.
Pray for the sweet rain.
Great rain-buckets have been overturned,
Oily clouds have formed,
Certainly it will rain,
Happily it is a great rain,
Everywhere sweet showers fall,
Sweet showers fall everywhere.
Truly it is a good rain,
The great rain knows its time,
A very heavy pour.
Pray for the moistening rain.[1]

On one of the three days I happened to meet the procession. Long files of barefooted men, some of them unaccustomed to go without shoes, walked to the beating of a large drum. In their hands were triangular paper flags stuck on millet-stalks. On their heads instead of hats they wore chaplets of twisted willow branches. A voice near me called out, "Kneel down," whereupon the procession dropped to its knees on the dusty road. Going on to the front I found the cause of the prostration. It was a *well* in the open square. At the side of the well knelt two or three priests in yellow robes chanting their liturgy, while a bundle of lighted incense sticks was planted

[1] Doolittle, *Vocabulary of the Chinese Language.*

on the ground. A short distance away facing the well, the central figure of the whole procession sat impassive within the canopy of his gaily-covered sedan chair. Without going too close I looked in and observed behind the curtains the little squat black-faced image of the Dragon King. When the brief chanting ceased, the worshippers near the well called out once or twice, "A-mi-to-fo," [1] and a shout was raised. The procession then rose to its feet, and went on its way through the town, performing similar ceremonies before wells or open water.

On the fourth day the ritual continued. In the precincts of the Town Temple I was chatting to a group that gathered round, quite willing to listen. One gentleman remarked, "It is really the Old Heavenly Grandfather we worship," to which I replied, "Has the Old Heavenly Grandfather an image?" There was a smile at this query, since the title is a colloquial term for the unseen Lord on High. Being among friends, I was invited into the office of the Guild of Agriculture to have further conversation. When leaving I apologized for my straw hat, because straw hats were not to be worn at the ceremonies. The fourth day happened to be Sunday. At the morning service in our church, Elder Shang led in special prayer for rain. The sequel was remarkable. On the following day thunder-clouds appeared and the longed-for rain came down, while on the day after that the "great rain-buckets" were overturned.

From these narratives two conclusions can be drawn: (1) That the way to obtain the favour of the Divine Powers is by the performance of the correct ritual; and (2) that what is sought from the gods is prosperity or material well-being, not moral reform or the salvation of the soul. The popular religion,

[1] I.e. Amida Buddha.

which binds the households of the nation in a complex network of traditional observances, holds its place apart from the ethical standard of the market and the home.

Has that ethical standard then any discoverable religious sanction? In some sense it has. There is a small Chinese publication called the *Book of Rewards and Punishments*, which is one of the best circulated tracts in existence. Its contents are put into the mouth of "The Exalted One," that is Laotzu, and are therefore authoritative, though the actual date of the composition is probably nine or ten centuries later than the time of the Taoist Sage. Many of its phrases have become embodied in the ordinary speech of the people, which is so commonly salted with proverbs. The argument of the tract resembles that of the first Psalm :—

> That man hath perfect blessedness
> Who walketh not astray. . . .
> The wicked are not so;
> But like they are unto the chaff.[1]

The portrait of the good man is drawn with refinement : "To orphans and widows he shows pity and compassion. He regards the success of others as he would his own, and their failures as though they touched him personally. He does not expose another's shortcomings, nor boast his own superiority. He suffers insult without resentment, and receives benefits with fear. He gives, not seeking recompense, nor afterwards regretting his gifts." [2] The bad man's portrait is more elaborate and circumstantial. For our immediate purpose the point to observe is that rewards and punishments are distributed by Heaven through celestial Ministers of Justice with such unerring

[1] Psalm i. 1, 4 (Scottish Metrical Version).
[2] Webster, *The Kan Ying Pien*, pp. 18, 19.

rectitude that "as the shadow follows the substance, so good and evil are requited." A space of three years is allowed for the operations of Heaven, at the end of which period the good man's prosperity is assured, and likewise the punishment of the wicked. Calamity can be turned into blessing by repentance. But—and here emerges a deep line of cleavage from Christianity—the Celestial Powers offer no help towards man's repentance, which thus tends to become a change of outward procedure on the ground that virtue is the safest policy.

Instead of appealing to the record preserved for us in books, there is another and probably a more scientific way of approach to the heart of the problem of Chinese religion in its bearing on the conduct of the average man. Western scholars like Professor Legge, Professor Giles, or Dr. Ross of Manchuria, have expounded the religion of China to a large extent from her literature, especially the ancient texts. For the higher faiths this method is indispensable. Where could we discover the meaning of Christianity if we had not the New Testament?

If however one is not content only to know the ideal, it may be an almost forgotten ideal, put down in black and white on the printed page, there is nothing for it but laboriously to probe into the actual present-day operative facts. Adopting the latter method a Dutch scholar, Dr. De Groot, spent years of investigation in the environs of Amoy, and later became Professor of Sinology in the University of Berlin. His conclusions have by no means won complete acceptance. Although based upon inductions from an immense array of data, yet his theory is considered by some authorities to be too sweeping. Where De Groot scores heavily is in bringing daylight into a jungle and in offering a clue to those who wish

to push their way through. What is De Groot's conclusion ?

" The main base of the Chinese system of religion," he says, " is a Universalistic Animism,—thoroughly Polytheistic and Polydemonistic. The gods are such *shen* as animate heaven, sun, moon, the stars, wind, rain, clouds, thunder, fire, the earth, seas, mountains, rivers, rocks, stones, animals, plants, things—in particular also, the souls of deceased men. And as to the demon world, nowhere under heaven is it so populous as in China. *Kwei* swarm everywhere, in numbers inestimable. . . . No place exists where man is safe from them. Public roads are haunted by them everywhere, especially during the night. . . . Armies of spectral soldiers, foot and horse, are heard moving through the sky, especially at night, kidnapping children, smiting people with disease and death, playing tricks of all sorts,—compelling men to defend themselves with noise of gongs, drums and kettles, with bows, swords and spears, and with flaming torches and fires."

" Heaven . . . is the chief *shen* or god, who controls all spectres and their doings ; we must not fail to lay stress upon the great tenet of Chinese theology that no spirits harm man but with the authorization of heaven, or its silent consent. . . . Idolatry means the disarming of spectres by means of the gods."

While De Groot sums up the effect of belief in the spirit world as an increase of the misery of life, he yet adds : " This doctrine indubitably exercises a mighty and salutary influence upon morals. It enforces respect for human life, and a charitable treatment of the infirm, the aged, the sick, especially if they stand on the brink of the grave. Benevolence and humanity, thus based on fear and selfishness, may have little ethical value in our eyes ; yet their exist-

ence in a country where culture has not yet taught men to cultivate goodness for the sake of good alone, may be greeted as a blessing." "Demonism, the lowest form of religion, in China a source of ethics and moral education—this certainly may be called a singular phenomenon, perhaps the only one of the kind to be found on this terrestrial globe." [1]

To return to the question which we have attempted with the help of Chinese material to elucidate, are we in a position to make a tentative statement by way of summary of the fascinating topic, which arose out of Mencius' doctrine of human nature? Allowing for the breach, sufficiently evident both in the West and in the East, between theory and practice, the essential point lies here: Does a man's religion improve or hinder his personal character? Is his God on the side of his own best qualities? Does his faith, whatever it may be, spur him on in a continually ascending climb towards perfection? Those are essentially the tests to be applied to all kinds of religious beliefs, in order to form an estimate of their true value. "By their fruits ye shall know them." [2]

(1) The first observation we may make is that religion can be a positive hindrance to morality. At a village near Kirin a band of robbers, surprised by the extent of their plunder in a rich man's house, put up an altar to the god of wealth, in order to show their gratitude by doing obeisance and burning incense in his honour. Faith of this sort may come under Professor Leuba's definition: "Life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion. The love of life, at any and every level of development, is the religious impulse." [3] The

[1] De Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, passim.
[2] Matt. vii. 20.
[3] Quoted by James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 507.

brigands for the time being gained a " more satisfying life," with which they associated their supernatural patron. But their religion sanctioned what they themselves knew to be wrong. That terrible indictment was the charge brought against the popular gods of ancient Greece. Xenophanes said : " Homer and Hesiod fastened upon the gods everything that is shame and blame among men." Referring to Egypt and Asia Minor, Dr. Glover says : " There was in the Eastern religions no great moral teaching, any more than in the religion of the Greek temples ; *that* was never a feature of ancient paganism ; morals, on the contrary, came from the philosophers and the fathers of families." [1] All the world over, religion as a separate activity may be found independently of the moral sense, the former concerning itself with the Divine, the latter with the human. Where this is the case, as Glover reminds us, Plato and Amos utter the same warning : " Religion without morality is a lie, and God damns it." [2]

(2) In the second place, conduct and character of even a high grade may exist apart from recognition of the Divine. Evidence of this was given, for example, in the trenches of France and Belgium by the unselfish lives of many of our soldiers, who would have denied adherence to any creed.

The protest of John Scotus Erigena in the ninth century against the prevailing conception of total depravity should not be forgotten : " The universal tendency is upward, for the divine goodness which ever worketh not only in the good but also in the wicked, is eternal and infinite." [3] In the education of children this truth is of paramount importance. A

[1] Glover, *Progress in Religion*, p. 266.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 133.
[3] Workman, *Christian Thought to the Reformation*, pp. 152, 153.

Presbyterian lady in the North of Ireland from a sense of duty began to teach her daughter the *Shorter Catechism.* She persevered until she came to the words: "All mankind by their fall lost communion with God." Glancing down at the sweet innocent face of her child she closed the book. She dared not go any further. From the standpoint of the Gospel and in the light of modern psychology, do we not all agree that she was right?

(3) In the third place, the teaching of Mencius is always open to the objection made against Nestorianism and Pelagianism, that they "alike overlook the cardinal factor in religion as distinct from morals, the 'grace' or condescension of God, and consequently, both undervalue the means of grace."[1] This is one of the reasons why among Confucianists the sense of sin is so deficient. Possibly it may have been because Confucian morality did not make too lofty a demand that it has continued in so large a measure to hold sway.

The true Christian doctrine on the subject is on the one hand what was taught by St. Paul, that salvation or abundance of life is only and altogether of God, and on the other hand the view of human nature which underlies the Parable of the Prodigal Son: even in the far country the young man did not cease from being a son, and was therefore able through his Father's yearning love to come to *himself.*

(4) Lastly, the end and aim of the Bible is the reconciliation of worship and conduct, the union of faith and works, pure religion issuing in stainless morality, as expressed by a prophet,[2] by an apostle,[3] and by our Lord[4]:—

"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do

[1] Workman, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
[2] Micah vi. 8.
[3] Gal. v. 22.
[4] Matt. v. 48.

justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?"

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance."

"Ye shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

CHAPTER VI

DELIVERANCE FOR ALL

EARLY BUDDHISM

Not in the abundance of the things a man possesseth, doth his life consist.

St. Luke.

Just as the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, just so has this doctrine and discipline only one flavour —the flavour of emancipation.

Gotama.

CHAPTER VI

DELIVERANCE FOR ALL

EARLY BUDDHISM

During the middle section of the first millennium before the Christian era, there was a widespread religious and philosophical awakening, both in Asia and Europe.[1] It was then that China saw the rise of Confucius, Laotzu, and Mencius; Persia—Zoroaster; Greece—Socrates, Plato and Aristotle; Judæa—Isaiah, Jeremiah and most of the other leading prophets of Israel. At the same period, India gave birth to the greatest of her gifted sons, who has influenced a larger number of the human race than any other man of his time. As Saunders says: "That an Indian monk, embracing poverty and the celibate life, writing no book, and setting up no hierarchy, should so profoundly sway the destinies of a continent, is one of the most impressive facts of history."[2] Besides Christianity there are only two faiths, Mohammedanism and Buddhism, which make a universal appeal, and of these two, Buddhism is sometimes regarded as our more serious rival. It is well to know the claim made by a Buddhist Catechism, translated with the approval of the late High Priest of Ceylon: "To this day Buddhism has still more adherents than Christianity

[1] Cf. H. G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*, p. 159: "That wonderful century which began the adolescence of mankind, the sixth century B.C."

[2] Saunders, *Gotama Buddha*, p. 1.

of all denominations together, namely, some 450 millions, therefore nearly one-third of the entire human race, although in the last 1,500 years the propagation of its doctrines has been at a standstill. A hundred years before the birth of Christ the disciples of the Enlightener of the World had already advanced east and west, far beyond the boundaries of India, and in the city of Alexandria and in Bactria dwelt many brethren and lay followers." [1]

While attempting to put before you some account of Gotama and of the religious revolution brought about by him, it will be my aim to try to discover the secret of the marvellous success of a religion, offering in its original form less than no attraction to the natural man. The secret is not easy to discover, partly because Gotama's teaching on its practical side is so severely simple, and partly because the Buddhism of to-day is so varied and complex. As you are doubtless aware, this religion has filled a void in the Chinese heart, and satisfied the longing for higher ideals and a state of perfection, in a way that neither Confucianism nor Taoism was able to do. And yet Gotama concerned himself with ethics to the exclusion of theology, more distinctly even than Confucius. Or we might put it thus: Gotama's teaching, with an intention poles asunder from that of the Chinese Sage, lays a similar emphasis upon character and conduct. The religions of ancient Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, are dead. The elevated doctrine of Zoroaster survives in the small exclusive philanthropic community of the Parsis, mainly in the city of Bombay. Why is it then that, in one form or another, the faith of Gotama after two thousand four hundred years is a living power to-day throughout the East of Asia, in Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, Tibet, China and Japan? And not

[1] Subhadra Bhikkhu, *The Message of Buddhism*, pp. 25, 26.

merely living, but also, strange to say, renewing in a measure the vigour of its youth.

Before we come to an exposition of this faith, let us look at a picture of its present activity. One of the sights of Peking, a city with the glamour of the Orient at every turn, is the Lama Temple. Its stately halls and wide arcades are as impressive as when, in former times, emperors and empresses went there to worship at its shrines. An object of wonder is the colossal figure, 75 feet high and 28 feet broad, made of gilt wood 290 years ago—the Buddha of the age to come, Maitreya, sometimes referred to as the Buddhist Messiah. Though it is said there are five hundred Mongol priests and acolytes within the temple walls, the glory of being a royal chapel has departed since democracy gained control of the land. Rough-looking monks invite the visitor's generosity on the ground that their revenues are now scarce. It is a strange place, where one is glad to have a companion by one's side.

Accompanying me was a learned young Chinese lecturer on Comparative Religion from the Peking Christian University. A native of Formosa, he had been brought up in Buddhist surroundings, but had been converted to Christ, when a teacher in Rangoon.

Speaking to one of the principal priests, my friend remarked :

" Why was that priest murdered some months ago ? "

" Oh," was the reply, " the murderer was one of us who got angry with the other, owing to a dispute about the management of the food."

" Where is the murderer now ? " I asked.

" In prison," said our informant.

The tragedy, it seemed, had not been reported in the Peking Press. As I looked at the faded crimson

robes, the shaven head and coarse features of this Mongolian monk, unconcernedly exposing the shame of his institution, the sinister repellent aspect of the temple was borne in upon my mind. Lamaism is indeed a debased form of Buddhism, being mixed with Tibetan magic and devil-worship. To an upper room my friend and I climbed by rickety stairs to see Yama, the lord of hell. He has the head of a bull, and holds in his hand the half of a human skull, out of which he is eating the brain. His feet are trampling down the bodies of men and birds and beasts. In the exercise of his function which is to guard and defend the doctrine, he is the most terrible of the divinities of Northern Buddhism. Worse still than Yama are the images in a side-temple kept veiled from public view. Their degradation no allegorical interpretation can hide. Small wonder is it that Mongol temple festivals, attended by crowds of worshippers of both sexes, have a bad reputation. " A sink of iniquity ! " one is inclined to exclaim.

Nevertheless, alongside this vileness there has to be recorded a pleasanter impression, fleeting it may be and unsubstantial. In the hall of the law, seated on mats on the floor facing each other in two long rows, some forty or fifty priests and acolytes in their proper vestments chanted from Tibetan liturgies. On the side-walls were depicted scenes out of the life of Buddha. While the sad and solemn music rose to the high roof of that majestic fane, something spoke within me as never before of the compelling power of the name that has subdued so many yearning hearts, age after age. On your visits to Paris have you ever felt in the Place Vendôme, or at the Arc de Triomphe, the magnetism of a famous name ? If not, then stand in the Church of the Invalides when the setting sun sheds its golden beams aslant the western windows, and gaze

down over the circular parapet on the beautiful polished casket of red porphyry, enshrining the mortal remains of France's chosen hero, and you may come to realize how France's capital is built around the memory of the most brilliant military genius of all history, Napoleon Buonaparte. In some such way, though on a far grander scale, has the memory of a son of peace, a healer of discord, been wrought into the fabric of the art and the thought of half the continent of Asia.

Let us now consider what manner of man was the historical Gotama, whose personality behind a thick cloud of legend can be not obscurely seen. To know the character of the founder is all-important when dealing with a religion, which in this respect is unlike a philosophy. An intellectual construction stands or falls on its own intrinsic merits, detached from the life of its original creator. It is otherwise with religion, and particularly with the three chief religions of the world. However far these faiths may have wandered from the sources of their inspiration, they are still closely bound up with the Arabian camel-driver, the Indian prince and the Galilean Carpenter, from whose inmost souls they sprang.

One hundred miles north of Benares about the year 560 B.C., Gotama Buddha was born. The date is somewhat uncertain, but the spot on the borders of Nepal has been identified by the discovery of King Asoka's inscription. Of gentle birth, his father being chieftain of a principality, the boy was surrounded with luxury, crowds of servants attending to his every whim. In after days he used to tell his disciples: "I wore garments of silk, and my attendants held a white umbrella over me." Married in his sixteenth year, three palaces were given him, one for each of the Indian seasons. His father tried in vain to keep

away from the boy all knowledge of human misery. The traditions tell how, driving one day in the park, the boy perceived an infirm old man leaning on a staff. The prince inquired from his charioteer: "Was he born in this state?" "No, master, he was once young and blooming as thou." "And how did he arrive at this deplorable condition?" pursued the boy. "It is the course of nature that all men must grow old and feeble, if they do not die young." This incident is said to have been followed later by the prince seeing a leper and then a decaying corpse, and last of all a holy ascetic, on whose face was reflected his deep peace of mind. Henceforth the resolution matured within Gotama to leave the world, and to take the path which he now began to believe that every one must travel who strives for perfection.

In his twenty-ninth year he finally decided on the step which has had such momentous consequences for the history of the world. Stealing out by night he first went to his wife's room, longing to clasp his little son to his breast, yet compelled to deny himself this joy lest he should disturb the mother in her sleep. Stripped of all earthly ties, renouncing riches, honours and a throne, rejecting even wife and child, he went forth against the will of his sorrowing parents, vowed to homelessness on the long search for the highest wisdom and the deepest peace. At first Gotama went to be a pupil of a famous recluse, learning from him speedily all that he could teach, which led by the eight stages of meditation to the realm of nothingness. Dissatisfied, he sought another renowned Brahman, who also taught direct intuition of the Absolute. Finding himself no nearer to his goal, Gotama now left the rockhewn hermitage in the hills of Magadha, and by a riverside lived with five mendicant companions practising such extreme asceticism that they were

worn to skin and bone. Having failed to win redemption by the way of knowledge, he was determined to seek it by the way of austerity. When through self-torture, fastings and vigils, the strength of his body had so dwindled that one night he sank unconscious to the ground, his companions fancied he was dead. On his recovery he realized that this way also was mistaken. Accordingly, though it meant parting company with his devoted disciples, he abandoned the life of mortification and went alone to the shelter of a grove of trees. There under a great fig-tree, the memorable bo-tree, his last fight was fought and the victory won. The truth he had vainly striven to find in man and in nature, through the teaching of others and the mortification of his flesh, he discovered in his own heart. One evening in the month of May, setting his teeth, he made a firm resolve: "Though skin, nerves and bone, should waste away, and life-blood itself be dried up, here sit I till I attain Enlightenment." Before the sun went down, a great light from within burst upon him, and there broke from his lips a song of triumph:—

Many a house of life
Hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught;
Sore was my ceaseless strife!

But now,
Thou Builder of this Tabernacle—Thou!
I know Thee! Never shalt Thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay;
Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!
Delusion fashioned it!
Safe pass I thence—deliverance to obtain.[1]

[1] Arnold, *The Light of Asia*, Bk. vi.

Gotama had become an Arahant, seeing the way to put an end to rebirth, and conscious that his own release from rebirth had come. In the *Discourses of Gotama*, he says : " When this knowledge had arisen within me, my heart and mind were freed from the drug of lust, from the drug of rebirth, and from the drug of ignorance. In me, thus freed, arose knowledge and freedom, and I knew that rebirth was at an end, and that the goal had been reached." In other words, he had passed from darkness to light, attaining the bliss of Nirvana. It was the joy and fervour of this experience that sent him out on a life-long mission to his people.

Not without terrible temptations had the goal been reached. Already on two occasions, after he left his home and on giving up his penance, he had been tried by Mara, the spirit of evil. And now, before taking up the burden of his mission, the devil assailed him once more. Having become the Awakened, the Buddha, the One who Knows, he had to decide whether to rest content with winning his own salvation, or to take pity on suffering humanity. The thought occurred to him : " Shall I proclaim the liberating message, so difficult to understand ? Mankind is bent on selfish desires. It will not want to hear the doctrine of the renouncement of the will-to-live, of the subduing of desires and passions, and of the path to deliverance." The records tell us that Brahma, the greatest of the gods, came to reassure him, and to rekindle his deep compassion for humanity. A voice spoke to him :—

> Open, O wise one, the door of Eternity ;
> Preach, O thou stainless, the truth thou hast found.
> Thou who art sorrow-free, preach to the sorrowing,
> Standing aloft let them hear the glad sound ! [1]

[1] Saunders, *Gotama Buddha*, p. 28.

With these words of command in his ears, the Buddha arose, left his hermitage, and took the road to Benares. In a deer park near the city he met the five ascetics, who had dwelt with him so long and then deserted him. Their unwillingness to hear him was quelled by the serene dignity of his bearing. To them he preached his first discourse called "The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Law," giving in concise terms the main points of his whole system. The five ascetics, convinced by this discourse, were the first to be admitted into the Sangha, the Order, the Brotherhood of the Elect. When after some months the number of disciples, not counting the lay followers, had grown to sixty, the "Sending Forth of the Brethren" took place. Being mostly Brahmans, who had been accustomed to self-denial and had been already instructed by the Buddha, the disciples could be trusted to go out singly as itinerant preachers. To these brethren the Buddha spoke: "Ye are delivered from all fetters, human and divine. Go forth, O Brethren, and wander about, and proclaim the Law for the deliverance of all living things, out of compassion for the world, for the joy, for the bliss, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Brethren, the doctrine glorious; preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure. There are many of pure heart and good intentions. These will be your adherents and the followers of Truth." The reference to "gods" in this address is thus commented on in the Buddhist Catechism: "The Brahman gods, . . . like all other gods worshipped in the five continents, stand in need of salvation through the progressive intelligence of mankind. Buddhism does not deny gods, nor does it attribute to them any special importance; it simply does not need them, neither as a prop to its ethics, nor for the attainment of salvation. Whoever wishes to believe in gods

may do so, only he must not forget that the gods, like all living beings, are perishable and subject to rebirth, though their lives may last for millions of our years, and that the saint who has reached perfection, and above all, the Buddha, are far superior to all gods." [1]

The times must have been ripe for moral and religious reform. Preaching was in the vernacular, and as with Christianity no distinction of caste was permitted. Outcastes were welcomed equally with Brahmans and kings. Herein lies one of the elements of the wide success of the early Buddhist missionaries. When Gotama appeared in his poor mendicant's garb and shorn head at his native town, the old Chief, his father, was ashamed of him, all the more on the following day as the son with his alms-bowl went begging from door to door. But eventually the Chief joined the Brotherhood, as did one after another of the Buddha's kinsfolk. Gotama's wife, seeing him once again after all the years of inward struggle, could not utter a word, but sank down before him, clasped his knees and wept bitterly. Gently the Buddha lifted her up, speaking to her words of comfort and instruction. He was loth to permit women to don the yellow robe and enter the Order. Thrice he refused an urgent request from the wives of the chiefs of his clan. At last he reluctantly gave way. "Let them," he commanded, "be subject and subordinate to the brethren. Even so their admission means that the Good Law shall not endure for a thousand years, but only for five hundred. For as when mildew falls upon a field of rice, that field is doomed, even so when women leave the household life and join an Order, that Order will not long endure. Yet as water is held up by a strong dyke, so have I established a

[1] Subhadra Bhikkhu, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

barrier of regulations which are not to be transgressed." [1]

For more than forty years during eight months in the year the Buddha wandered from village to village, from country to country, gathering disciples into his corporate community, the Sangha. The wet season was spent in retreat, meditation and discourse. The closing years of the Blessed One were saddened by the plots of a traitor in the camp, his own cousin, who, having failed in his attempts on his master's life, managed to split the community by demanding greater austerities. But the Buddha remained to the end calmly confident that his teachings would prevail. About the year 482 B.C., continuing his exhortations to the monks even on his dying couch under the sandal trees, the worn-out teacher in the seventy-ninth year of his age serenely passed away. His last words were: "Behold now, O Brethren, I take my leave of you. All things are composite, and all are subject to decay. Work with diligence for the goal of freedom." His body was cremated with the honour due to the mightiest of kings. In 1898 there was discovered an urn, bearing the inscription, "Remains of the exalted Buddha of the Sakyan clan." [2]

One of the logia of Gotama might fitly be applied to himself, as well as to another preacher, with whom he had not a little in common, England's greatest evangelist, John Wesley. The saying is: "The morally strenuous do not die." For however difficult it may be for us to grasp the full meaning of Gotama's teaching, one thing is clear. The way of salvation he proclaimed was through methodical rigorous discipline of the body and the soul. It was however a Middle Path, in a deeper sense than Confucius' Doctrine of the

[1] Saunders, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 42.
[2] Cave, *Living Religions of the East*, p. 113.

Mean. "There are two extremes, O Brethren," said their Master, "which he who strives for deliverance ought not to follow; on the one hand, the craving for the gratification of the passions and sensual pleasures is . . . degrading and ruinous; . . . on the other hand, the practice of self-mortification and asceticism is gloomy, painful and useless. The Middle Path only, discovered by the Tathagata,[1] avoids these two extremes, opens the eyes . . . and leads to freedom, to wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nirvana." [2]

What, then, was this Middle Path, this revolutionary discovery of Gotama, crowning his ardent quest after a way of salvation for himself and for all men? The answer is to us inevitably disappointing. So true is it that a religion can only be explained from the inside. Unlike a mere system of speculation, it requires a believer in a particular religion to give us a fair account of it; no matter how unprejudiced a Protestant may be, he cannot adequately expound Catholicism. Much as I should like to be able to enter with zest into the heart of the Buddha's doctrine, I am by reason of my faith in Christ unable to do so. Compared with the warmth of life and the boundless joy of the Gospels, Gotama's principles in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path seem bleak and stiff and cold. How anyone, given the choice of salvation through the love of God or through the suppression of desire, could deliberately prefer the latter, thus following the Buddha rather than the Christ, passes one's comprehension.

Perhaps the most effective approach to an understanding of Gotama's doctrine is along the avenues of karma and metempsychosis, two theories of life

[1] "Tathagata" is the term used by the Buddha of himself: it probably means "the one who has arrived" at redemption.—Cave, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[2] Subhadra Bhikkhu, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

generally accepted in India, both then and now. By itself karma is a Christian idea expressed in the impregnable Pauline dogma, which is at the foundation of all true ethics and religion: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." [1] Each of us is bound irrevocably to the self that we have built up by our good deeds and our bad, the wood, hay and stubble, along with the silver and the gold.[2] But when, modifying this conception, there is introduced the primitive notion received by the Buddha from the age in which he lived, that men are predestined to be repeatedly embodied in some living form, possibly as lower animals or hungry demons, then the law of karma assumes a very different and a far more sinister aspect. It was from the nightmare of metempsychosis that the Buddha offered a way of escape. And he did it by diagnosing the disease of life, and prescribing the remedy, in his Four Noble Truths.

In the first sermon to the five ascetics at Benares he said: "This is the Noble Truth of Suffering: birth is suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering. Separation from beloved objects is suffering; presence of objects we hate is suffering; not to obtain what we desire is suffering. In short, sensate existence by its very nature is suffering.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering: thirst that leads to rebirth, the craving for sensate existence and for pleasure, seeking satisfaction, now in this form, now in that. This thirst is threefold, for pleasure, for existence, and for prosperity.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering: it ceases with the complete cessation of this thirst—a cessation consisting in the absence of every passion—with the abandoning of this thirst, the doing away with it, the destruction of desire.

[1] Gal. vi. 7. [2] For a further reference to karma, cf. Chap. XII.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the Cessation of Suffering: that holy Eightfold Path—Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Meditation."

We have here the essentials of the gospel of Gotama the Buddha, the Light of Asia: life is, by its very nature, suffering; suffering is caused by thirst, craving, or desire; suffering, and therefore life, as we know it, comes to an end with the cessation of desire; the destruction of all craving, and consequently of the self-life, is brought about by rightness of thought, speech and behaviour. How astonishingly simple! Surely it speaks well for the masses of mankind, both learned and unlearned, that they have lent an attentive ear to the stern sad message—"Repent, for the Kingdom of Nirvana is at hand." We seem to hear the burning words of the saintly reformer in the midst of the shepherdless multitudes, crying aloud: "Life has you in its grip. The evil that men do lives after them. That is why you are now in pain and misery of body and of soul. And you think the future is devoid of hope. You think you are bound, hand and foot, to the endless wheel of an existence, such as this or worse. Not so. There is an open door. Press through it as I have done, and you will be free. Look where I am pointing. Do you see the blue sky beyond your prison-house? Your selfish ambition, mean lust, covetousness, envy, pride and cruelty—nay, your very clinging to existence itself—these are your prison-walls. The locked door of escape has a key. In your own hands lies the key. It is called *renunciation*, the giving-up of self, the denial of the transient, unstable, false ego within you. It is by shutting out anger, malice, hatred of anything that lives, by meekness, emptiness and poverty, by

love and charity towards all, that you shall win your deliverance and go forth from your wretched prison-house, never to return. Come then, leave father and mother, wife and child, home and comfort and the snare of riches—come and follow me. I have no possessions, yet everything is mine. For I have found Nirvana. If you strive, you also may escape by the narrow gate, leading to where I am. Then you will at last find peace, endless peace, and a bliss that ever follows on the death of self. What happens when my body perishes, I know not. One thing I know. The cord that bound me to the thirst for selfish life is for ever sundered. No power can drag me back to separate existence. I want nothing, neither death nor life. Empty of all desire, I have even now gained perfect peace, in the future to be crowned by eternal emancipation, beyond anything that the heart of man can conceive. If you ask me, Is it annihilation?—all I can say is that this present life is a terrifying dream, set free from which, we depart to where suffering and sorrow are no more."

Before passing on to consider the subsequent history of Buddhism, a few words may be added with reference to the second of Gotama's contributions to metaphysics, the first being his doctrine of Nirvana, already touched upon. Connected with that subtle conception is the theory of the impermanence of the ego. Besides ignoring the existence of the World-Soul, he denied the presence of an individual soul. All signs of a self are absent. Form, sensation, consciousness—not one of these things is the self. But the curious part of it is that, far from implying materialism in the modern sense, this doctrine leads in an opposite direction. If *I* do not really exist, then it would seem obvious that the dissolution of my body means the end of all that is meant by me. Not so, for as a

Buddhist sage says: "Although the name and form . . . born into the next existence is different from the name and form ending at death, nevertheless it is sprung from it. Therefore one is not freed from one's evil deeds." [1] In fact we may conclude that since it is not the soul which migrates in reincarnation from one body to another, what gives rise to new incarnations is the thirst, the craving for life, and that alone. The Buddhist Catechism goes so far as to designate this desire, "the real creative power; it is what other religions personify as god; it is the preserver and destroyer of all things." [2]

When we look into the story of the spread of Buddhism, the first thing that strikes us is the influence of kings. The most famous of these royal patrons was Asoka, who ruled over a great united North Indian kingdom in the third century B.C. A large number of his inscriptions on pillars and rock-walls have been deciphered. In his reign was held a celebrated council which sent forth missionaries in many directions beyond the frontiers of India. The king's own moral earnestness and zeal for the faith are beyond question.

Towards the end of the first century A.D. flourished the second noted patron, Kaniska, Emperor of Indo-Scythia. During his reign a fundamental division took place among the followers of the Buddha, giving rise to two types of religion, Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle, and Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle. The former type, which adheres more closely to the original tradition of Gotama, prevails to-day in the southern countries of Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Cambodia; while the latter is characteristic of the north, Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan. "Speaking through a parable, Buddha is said to have adumbrated

[1] Cave, *op. cit.*, pp. 121, 122.
[2] Subhadra Bhikkhu, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

the wider success of the Greater Vehicle. A certain man's house took fire, whereupon he brought a goat-carriage to carry away his children. By and by he fetched a spacious wagon." [1] That is to say, instead of Buddhism being a way by which only a few might reach Nirvana, the road was made wider for the multitude. The change was momentous. Hitherto, although Gotama and his disciples were not recluses but missionaries, the ideal aimed at was in the main that of the Arahant, whose mind was concentrated on his own salvation. Now there appeared a new and startling development, the origin of which is obscure. It was the conception of the Bodhisattva, called in Chinese, Pusa, the compassionate servant and lover of humanity. Sakyamuni Buddha had said: "Betake yourselves to no external refuge. . . . Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves." [2] Having once attained Nirvana, the home of tranquillity, "the Arahant will never again be subject to the pains and sorrows of phenomenal existence. He has reached the 'other shore.'" [3] Mahayana Buddhism on the other hand set up the ideal of the Bodhisat, the embodiment of supreme unselfishness, one who, though potentially a Buddha within reach of Nirvana, "abstains from eternal blessedness so long as there remains in the universe a single being who is still enmeshed in pain or misery." "He has solemnly dedicated himself to the service of all beings who stand in need of succour." [4] In an Indian classic of the seventh century this lofty aim is given beautiful expression: "I yield myself to all living beings to deal with me as they list; they may smite or revile me for ever, . . . why shall I care?

[1] Giles, *Confucius and his Rivals*, p. 168.
[2] Johnston, *Buddhist China*, pp. 66–68.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

. . . An enemy is like a treasure found in my house, won without labour of mine. I must cherish him, for he is a helper in the way to Enlightenment. As long as the heavens and the earth abide, may I continue to overcome the world's sorrows. May all the world's suffering be cast upon me, and may the world be made happy by all the merits of the Bodhisattva." [1]

An even more significant change, due to the Greater Vehicle, was brought about by the intrusion of the belief in an Eternal God, Supreme Creator of all things. Such an idea "is entirely opposed to the original Buddhist system of thought. . . . The historic Gotama is" thus "reduced to being but a transitory manifestation of this Eternal Being." [2] We have seen how, according to the orthodox interpretation, the saint who has attained perfection, and above all, the Buddha, are far superior to all the gods. Since then Buddha is higher in rank than even Brahma, the mightiest of the known gods, his deification sooner or later became inevitable.[3] Consequently for the laity a new emphasis came to be placed on faith, rather than on intellectual analysis and moral effort. It was this transfigured Buddhism, developed out of a non-theistic ethical discipline into a popular and compelling religion of faith in a divine Sakyamuni Buddha, and still more, faith in the celestial Bodhisattvas, that found its way into Northern Asia, where for two millenniums it has been the chief solace for seekers after God among the millions of China and Japan.

In India the gradual decline and final eclipse of Buddhism furnish food for reflection. All the more

[1] Cave, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

[2] Hackmann, *Buddhism as a Religion*, p. 52.

[3] The result of the process appears in China, where Fan Wang (the Chinese name for Brahma) is merely "an attendant or vassal of Buddha. He may be seen occupying this position in various temples in company with Yü-Ti, the supreme god of the Taoists." —Couling, *Encyc. Sinica*, p. 173.

remarkable is this fact, when it is remembered that for the first four or five centuries of our era the way of Gotama largely superseded Brahmanism in the popular estimation. The famous Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hsien, traversed India about the year 400, and found a large number of Buddhist monasteries throughout the country. To relics of Gotama, his tooth, his staff, or a bone of his skull, miraculous powers were attributed. By degrees, choked in the rank undergrowth of Hindu superstition, the message of the Buddha lost its vitality. Intended as a reform within the body of Brahmanism, the older faith in course of time proved its strength by throwing off the usurper and completely reasserting its supremacy. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries when Islam penetrated into India, there was little of Buddhism remaining for the iconoclastic Moslem to demolish.

Although there are historical notices of Buddhist priests arriving in China prior to the reign of the Emperor Ming Ti in the first century A.D., it is from this date that the real entrance of Buddhism into China is commonly reckoned. The emperor "is said to have had a dream, in which a high shining gold image of a god appeared to him, which entered his palace. The interpreter of the dream . . . attributed this apparition to the Buddha Sakyamuni, who was revered in Central Asia and India, and who demanded worship in China also." [1] It is doubtless a vain fancy to reflect on what might have happened if the emissaries of the emperor, sent to procure the requisites for the practice of the new religion, had gone farther west than India. There was no star to guide their footsteps to the City of David. After an absence of two years the embassy returned to China in A.D. 67 accompanied by two Buddhist Indian monks. In the imperial city of that

[1] Hackmann, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

time a temple was built, and thus began the long and chequered career of the Light of Asia among the cultured peoples of the north.

In closing, let us see whether we have caught a glimpse of the secret of Gotama's success. For one thing, he belonged to a social grade, to which no other founder of religion happened to belong, that of an aristocrat by birth. Abandoning his princely rank he became a beggar. Though he was rich, he gave up everything in the quest for the true riches, the precious treasure of the soul.

Again, help was rendered to his cause, as we have seen, by rulers, Indian and Chinese. The seed sown by the mendicant took root in high places. Without doubt that is another reason for the spread of this unworldly doctrine.

But beyond all else, the principal source of Gotama's extraordinary success lay in the personality of the preacher himself. Everything goes to show that he must have been a man of magnetic winsomeness, compassionate, upright and wise. In no other fashion can we account for the devotion, bordering on worship, which he inspired in the hearts of his disciples. As a Western writer eloquently puts it: "No man ever lived so godless yet so godlike. Arrogating to himself no divinity, despairing of future bliss, but without fear as without hope, leader of thought but despising lovingly the folly of the world, exalted but adored, the universal brother, he wandered among men, simply, serenely; with gentle irony subduing them that opposed him, to congregation after congregation speaking with majestic sweetness, the master to each, the friend of all." [1] The friend of all indeed he proved himself to be, for was it not he who gave command-

[1] Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 325, quoted in Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

ment to his followers: "Whoever would wait upon me, he should wait upon the sick?"

Perhaps some of you may feel not quite at ease listening to such a panegyric upon a brother-man. "If," it may be asked, "Gotama Buddha was really so great and pure as you have tried to picture him, have we a right to depose him from his spiritual throne in order to make way for another King, who came to earth five hundred years after him?" Let us bring our doubt to the King Himself, and along with the doubt bring Gotama. Can we suppose for an instant that Jesus Christ would not rejoice to welcome a forerunner, so intent upon the highest as the Prince of the Sakyas? Surely we have not so learned Christ, who counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, becoming obedient even unto death.[1] Rather do we hear Him uttering His glad commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."[2]

[1] Phil. ii. 6–8. [2] Matt. xxv. 23.

CHAPTER VII

THE PURE LAND

PRESENT-DAY BUDDHISM IN CHINA AND JAPAN

But on, we'll plumb the Deep, whate'er befall,
For in the Nought I trust to find the All.

GOETHE, *Faust* (Latham).

And I have heard the faith by Buddha taught
Lauded as pure and free from earthly taint;
Why then these carved and graven idols, fraught
With gold and silver, gems, and jade, and paint?

From a Chinese poem of the seventh century (H. A. Giles).

CHAPTER VII

THE PURE LAND

PRESENT-DAY BUDDHISM IN CHINA AND JAPAN

In view of the prevailing culture, the hold gained in China by the foreign faith of Buddhism is not a little surprising. From the remote past, the attitude of the Celestials has been as Mencius expressed it: "I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land to change barbarians, but I have never yet heard of any being changed by barbarians." Of greater weight even than this natural contempt for the rest of the world was the Confucian principle of reverence for parents, a principle centring in the patriarchal family continued from age to age. A religion which called men and women away from family life, leading them to retirement from the world, could not but be faced with hostility by a social system based on ancestor worship. In the famous words of Mencius: "Three things are unfilial, and having no sons is the worst." That is to say, it is the highest duty of a son to have male offspring, who, when he is dead, may keep up the regular family worship: through lack of male children this worship would cease to be offered. Reverence to parents and ancestors being the greatest of all virtues, there follows the immediate corollary that the celibate life is a crime, a sin against nature and society. Hence arose the

bitter opposition of the Confucians to the imported Indian faith.

In the fifth century an imperial decree commanded that the Buddhist monks should be put to death, and the images abolished. It was not, however, till the ninth century under the Tang dynasty that official persecution was so severe as to aim at suppressing Buddhism altogether. The monasteries to the number of 4,600 were destroyed. More than 260,000 monks and nuns were compelled to return to secular life. Whilst a very small number of temples were allowed to remain under strict government control, 40,000 religious buildings were pulled down. Although from that day till now Confucianism has held undisputed sway as the official faith, Buddhism shorn of its glory, crushed and almost stamped out, did not die. Judaism came to China, but failed to take root. Christianity in its Nestorian form flourished to a limited extent for several centuries and then dwindled away, leaving only an inscribed stone tablet and a vague memory behind. Not so with the doctrine of Sakyamuni. For whatever reason, even the fiercest opposition has been unable to stamp it out.

A short drive in a motor-car along a metalled road leading out of Peking brings one to the picturesque Western Hills, the pleasure-ground of byegone emperors. Near the Summer Palace the crystal-pure water of the Jade Fountain bubbles up in a pond from which flows a perennial stream. On the hilltop hard by the Fountain stand tall sentinel pagodas, lovely in their slender symmetrical proportions, one of white marble and another of glazed porcelain. Coming close to these pagodas, one is ashamed to observe the damage done by Europeans in the Boxer year, defacing such objects of beauty as their vandal hands could reach. Looking down over the deserted

courtyards and the decaying roofs of a monastery in ruins, one can imagine the former days of imperial favour, when wealth and skill built these monuments of man's search for the Divine. Among the fine buildings scattered over the Western Hills is the Purple Cloud Temple, dating back some six hundred years, the revenues of which are eked out by its being partially used as a sanatorium for the sick. The glory of Buddhism may well seem to have departed.

We are now to consider the teaching of the Mahayana or Greater Vehicle, in the form which has developed in China. The principal sect of Chinese Buddhism is the Contemplative School, the doctrines of which were brought from India by Bodhidharma in A.D. 520. The coming of this sage is a noteworthy event because, reckoning from Sakyamuni, he was the twenty-eighth patriarch or chief authority of Buddhism. With his departure from the soil of India the patriarchate for the future was transferred to China. The doctrine of Bodhidharma is summed up thus: "You will not find Buddha in images or books. Look into your own heart: that is where you will find Buddha." [1]

More than a hundred years prior to the time of this patriarch, another distinguished Indian, coming also as a missionary to China, left behind a translation of the *Diamond Classic*, probably the most popular of the multitudes of Buddhist books in the land. The language of this little volume is anything but easy to understand, and yet it is child's play compared with some of the other famous classics of the Mahayana. Take the following samples from the Diamond Scripture: "The Lord Buddha said: No heart is really a heart, but is merely called a heart. Therefore . . . you are not to get a past heart, a present heart, or a future heart." In my Chinese copy of the Diamond

[1] Johnston, *Buddhist China*, p. 83.

Scripture, this passage is annotated in the following simple fashion : " Without a character of one's own to obey, without any Buddha to pray to, shedding great light, dispelling all darkness—that is called the eyes of Buddha." Again : " All rules of life are a dream, the shadow of a bubble, like the dew, like the lightning. Thus ought we to regard them." On that dictum the annotation is fairly comprehensive : " All laws and doctrines are empty." That the Buddha himself shares in the illusory character of all objective existence is shown in a stanza, which might be freely rendered thus :—

> If in the flesh you seek me,
> Or listen for my sound,
> No vision true will greet you,
> No Buddha will be found.

That all phenomena are not merely transitory, as Gotama held, but empty and unreal, is a theory which later Mahayana philosophy from the fourth century of our era made one of its corner-stones. In the Diamond Scripture we find another element which was destined to change the inner essence of Sakyamuni's message. Here is the statement of the doctrine of salvation not by works but by faith put into the mouth of the Buddha : " If a good man, or good woman, were to give up in the morning as many of his or her lives (in rebirths) as there are sands in the River Ganges, and to do the same at noonday, and again in the evening, and to continue to do this every day for an innumerable number . . . of years ; and if, on the other hand, there should be one who, having heard this Scripture, should yield up his heart to implicit belief—then the happiness of this last would exceed the happiness of that other." [1] The aim of the Diamond

[1] Giles, *Confucianism and its Rivals*, p. 171 (slightly altered).

Sutra, in the words of the Chinese commentator, is " that men by means of the doctrine may come to know their true selves "—an aim in every sense laudable and worthy. In this book there occurs a passage attributed to Gotama, which the late Dr. Timothy Richard called " one of the most remarkable prophecies in the whole range of Sacred literature," translating it as follows : " Five hundred years after my death there will arise a religious prophet who will lay the foundation of his teaching, not on one, two, three, four, or five Buddhas, nor even on ten thousand Buddhas, but on the Fountain of all the Buddhas ; when that One comes, have faith in Him, and you will receive incalculable blessings." [1]

At this point it will be convenient to refer to the claim made by Dr. Timothy Richard that the Mahayana is not Buddhism properly so called, but " an Asiatic form of the . . . gospel of our Lord and Saviour Christ, in Buddhist nomenclature, differing from the old Buddhism just as the New Testament differs from the Old." [2] Now " Li Ti-mo-tai," as he was called in Chinese, was a name held in honour by educated men of all sections throughout the country. For forty-five years a Baptist missionary, he was in the latter part of his life at the head of the Christian Literature Society for China. An ardent student of Chinese Buddhism, Dr. Richard hoped for a union of the great religions of the East, especially Higher Buddhism, with Christianity. " The religion of the future," he wrote, " which will satisfy all nations and all races will not be born of any party cry, but will be born from the habit of looking at the highest and permanent elements in all religions, and gladly recognizing all that helps to save man, body, soul, and

[1] Richard, *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*, p. 47.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

spirit, individually or collectively, as Divine." [1] Whether as a cause or a consequence of this splendid hope, Dr. Richard read Christian meanings into texts, not so interpreted by other scholars. This is seen in the case of the next Mahayana classic we shall touch upon, *The Awakening of Faith*, one of the two books translated by Dr. Richard under the title *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*. Of it the translator says: "If we estimate the value of books by the number of adherents to their doctrines, then, after the Bible, the Koran, the Confucian Classics, and the Vedas, this volume, about the size of the Gospel of Mark, ranks next, or fifth, among the sacred books of the world. . . . Its new doctrines were, that of One Soul immanent for good in all the universe, that of a Divine Helper of men, of individual immortality and growth in the likeness of God, of the importance of faith in God to produce good works, and that of the willingness of the best spirits to make sacrifices to save others." [2] All this is very encouraging to a propagandist of the Truth. Alas! when the Rev. C. W. Liu, the spiritually minded and well read minister of Fakumen congregation, one of the foremost members of our Manchurian Synod, had perused *The Awakening of Faith*, he brought it to me with the laconic remark, "I do not understand it." And no wonder! For apparently what the abstruse Indian author intended to convey was ethical exhortation, based not upon the idea of God in any theistic sense, but upon the philosophical conception of a non-personal Ultimate, concerning which we can neither say it exists, nor that it does not exist. "We come to the conclusion," says *The Awakening of Faith*, "that all things and conditions in the phenomenal world, . . . have no more reality than the images in

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 35. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

a mirror. They evolve simply from the ideality of a particularizing mind."

It may seem strange that from this highly speculative idea of an unknown substratum of the universe, there could follow practical directions for one's daily life. Yet so it is. Or rather, the connection of the ethics with the metaphysics is the other way round. By the exercise of charity to the needy, by teaching the ignorant, by patience in the endurance of suffering, energy in keeping the ten commandments of Buddhism, and especially by the practice of solitary inhibition, making all mental states to cease—by these deeds faith is perfected. Complete faith is directed towards the three precious jewels, the Buddha, the Law, and the Order of Bodhisattvas, and crowning all is joyous belief in the Ultimate Reality. Goodness of life therefore along with religious worship leads to the goal, which is the direct apprehension of Reality. And—here we have the essence of the new metaphysics—this Reality is identified with emptiness, the Void.[1]

Before we waive aside this curious teaching on the ground that it is quite out of touch with our own habits of thought, permit me to offer an illustration of its meaning. In my Saturday afternoon Bible Class for men of the student type, we were recently favoured with a statement of personal experience from one of the most remarkable young men of our town, widely read in the Chinese Classics and a fine speaker. Mr. Tswei remains on the border of the Christian Church, but is more resolute in his pursuit of the perfect life than many of those inside it. On that Saturday he told us that apart from his habit of reading daily a

[1] For the more distinctively Chinese philosophy of Choutzu and Chu Hsi, belonging to a much later period than *The Awakening of Faith*, cf. Chap. IV,

book on virtue of some kind, he practised silence for two hours every day. At these times he concentrated his mind on emptiness, steadily shutting out all thoughts and emotions, both good and bad. By dint of perseverance he had attained what he called the second stage, a deep peace, unutterable in its intensity. At this stage the true inner light manifested itself, illumining his life with wisdom, uprightness and certainty. There was, he went on to inform us, a still further stage in meditation, as yet beyond his reach. When our discussion had ended, we all stood up to pray. After a few moments of stillness Mr. Tswei led us in a prayer addressed to the "Great Lord of the Void," a striking expression, recalling the Biblical invocation, "O Thou that inhabitest Eternity." We were held in the grip of the Unseen.

Out of the enormous Canon of the Chinese Mahayana, consisting of 1,662 books, we have now glanced at two of the best-known works. It should be noted that Northern Buddhism has no authoritative scripture like the Bible or the Koran, each of the sects making its own free choice. As to the extent of the Canon, a hint is gained from the fact that in 1922 the Commercial Press of Shanghai issued a set of 751 subsidiary Buddhist volumes containing 7,600 pages at the price, for the cheaper edition, of £67 sterling.

Books or gods, which? To those who cannot read—and in China they number hundreds of millions—the printed page is sealed. But an embodiment of the Divine mercy in an image made with hands brings some satisfaction to their aching hearts. Passing on then to a consideration of two of the principal gods, Kwanyin and Amida, we should first observe how central in worship is the idea of a trinity, which Taoism also adopted in imitation of Buddhism. The

original creed, now called the "Formula of Guidance," was—

> I take refuge in the Buddha as my Guide ;
> I take refuge in the Doctrine as my Guide ;
> I take refuge in the Order as my Guide.

These three gems, the Buddha, his Law, and his Church or Brotherhood of the Monks, are characteristic of both Northern and Southern Buddhism. But in Mahayana philosophy there emerged another kind of trinity, the "Doctrine of the Three Bodies" of Buddha : (1) The body of the law or of spirit, the underlying substance of the universe, the law of cause and effect, identified with the void ; (2) the body of compensation or of bliss, supermundane, glorious, manifesting itself everywhere, but only to be perceived by the saints ; (3) the body of flesh or of accommodation to the needs of humanity, represented by the myriads of Buddhas who have lived on earth, of whom the latest was Sakyamuni. The true significance of such a trinity in unity was apparently missed by the modern schools of Buddhism, when they placed three images in the temple side by side. There are various triads of images. Where Sakyamuni appears, he is seated cross-legged on a lotus blossom, with eyes half-closed in an attitude of meditation.

By far the most popular of the Buddhist gods in China is Kwanyin, the Goddess of Mercy. Of her it has been said by a leading authority that "in the eyes of multitudes of devout Buddhists Kwanyin occupies a place that is not unworthy of comparison with that of the Virgin in Catholic Christendom." [1] A celestial bodhisat, the chief attendant of Amida, originally male and so at the present time in Japan, Kwanyin's full title is "the All-compassionate Un-

[1] Johnston, *op. cit*, p. 101.

created Saviour, the Royal Bodhisat who hears the cries of the world." [1] Overlooking the River Somme near its mouth, there is a quaint little church on a hill at St. Valéry. The church, which is specially for sailors and has a model of a ship within it, is dedicated to Mary, the Star of the Sea. This function of watching over those in peril on the deep is in China attributed to Kwanyin, as is witnessed by the passage in the ancient Lotus Scripture, where we read: "If many merchants seeking gold and silver . . . agate, coral, amber, pearls, and such-like treasures, and when sailing on the ocean meet a typhoon blowing their ships adrift among cannibal tribes, if there is even a single one in the ship who calls on the Name of Kwanyin, all those on board will be delivered from danger. For this reason Kwanyin is called the 'Hearer of the world's prayers.'" [2]

In a vast land like China the number of sailors needing protection is small in comparison with the myriads of mothers longing for children, particularly for boys. Hence a still more important attribute of this goddess is that which is described in the promise of the Lotus Scripture: "If a woman desires a son and worships Kwanyin, she will get a happy, virtuous, and wise son. If she desires a daughter, she will get a good and beautiful daughter, who will be rooted in virtue, loved and respected by all." With a character so beneficent and an influence so far-reaching, we can readily understand how Kwanyin is revered and loved in China, in much the same way as Amida is in Japan. The European art of the Renaissance had no more inspiring subject than the Divine Child and His Mother. In my slight experience of religious art in the Far East, so often showing itself in tawdry or repulsive products of a meagre imagination, I have come across

[1] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 267. [2] Richard, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

nothing finer than a black polished marble statue of Kwanyin in her usual sitting posture, about three feet in height, at the Purple Cloud Temple near Peking. The Apostle in distress of soul on the streets of Athens had no eye for the sculptured beauty confronting him at every turn. His only thought was for what lay behind the lovely forms—the ignorance which reared the altar to a God Unknown. As for me, I must confess that gazing at Kwanyin, without a trace of anything incongruous in her simple setting of white walls, the dark marble statue gave me great delight. The only other memory I can compare with it is of a Sleeping Buddha in the Vidyodaya College Chapel at Colombo. And there it was not the very large human figure entering Nirvana which caused the attraction, but rather the dignity and grace of the fresh flower offerings scattered on the altar in front of the sleeper —these and the absence of oil and candle-grease.

We have next to consider the greatest of the Buddhas in the Mahayana theology, called in Japanese Amida,[1] whose embodiment or reflex on earth was Gotama Sakyamuni. The Japanese Shinshu sect stands out sharply from most of the other types of Buddhism because of its doctrine of Amida, which, however alien to the teaching of Gotama, is held to have been delivered to the world by the Master himself in the evening of his days, and to " contain the quintessence of Buddhist truth." [2] Japan at present is the centre of Northern Buddhist activity. A revival of this religion has spread from there to China. It is therefore advisable to examine the nature of Shinshu, or the True Religion, the youngest and by far the largest

[1] Amitabha, the Sanskrit form of the name, means " the Buddha of infinite splendour." The Chinese form is Amitofo, of which the last syllable (fo) is the word for Buddha, the character by its composition signifying " Western-kingdom-man."

[2] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

of the sects in Japan. Its root lies in the principle of salvation by faith in Amida, looked upon as the one and only Buddha. Curiously enough, the doctrines of Shinshu, which were enunciated seventeen centuries after Gotama, while similar in aim to those of the original founder, completely overthrew the teaching of Gotama on three fundamental points. Both the early Buddhism and this comparatively modern development were intended as reforms of previously existing faiths, in the direction of simplicity. The remarkable thing however is that Shinshu (*a*) made a single Divine Being indispensable, (*b*) advocated faith in this God as alone necessary for salvation, and (*c*) on the side of the practical life, abandoned the rule of celibacy, permitting priests to marry and rear families in the ordinary way. This transformed Buddhism is hardly recognizable as descended from Gotama, who had no need for God, requiring not faith but individual effort to ensure deliverance, and who called away from their homes all those men and women bent upon reaching Nirvana in the short space of an earthly life.

The founder of the Japanese sect of Shinshu was Shinran, the son of a high official at the imperial court. Born in 1173, the boy from an early age desired to leave the world and become a priest. At the age of nine he was placed in a monastery of the Buddhist Tendai sect, which then held the position of an established church. Whilst still a young man he became rector of one of the temples, being distinguished both for piety and for organizing ability. The Tendai system attempted to harmonize all the religious influences coming from the mainland of Asia, along with the native Shinto cult. It was thus bewilderingly complicated. Becoming dissatisfied with such a system, Shinran at first tried to gain peace by wide

study and then by prayer at one shrine after another. At last before an image of Kwannon,[1] the attendant of Amida, the youthful seeker received an answer to his prayers. The answer came in the shape of a vision of Kwannon, who commanded: "Go to Genku, the holy hermit . . . and he shall teach you." [2] Shinran did as he was commanded, and became the hermit's favourite disciple.

One day a member of a powerful Samurai clan came to the hermit with an extraordinary request. "I want to find," he said, "amongst your disciples a husband for my daughter. I wish my daughter's husband to be a priest as well as a householder. . . . I desire him, by means of a concrete example, to demonstrate that the religion of Salvation by Faith in Amida is one which concerns the layman as well as the monk. It will be for the good of the country if we can show that the family and not the monastery is the true focus of religion." [3] The hermit's choice fell on his favourite, but the young monk was at first very unwilling, and only after more than a year of hesitation did he give his consent. In so doing he took a courageous step, breaking away from an ecclesiastical discipline undisputed for two thousand years.

There is a romantic story told of Shinran while still a rising monk, before he began to be troubled with doubts. Having been away on business at Kyoto he was returning to his monastery, when at the foot of the sacred mountain he was accosted by a young maiden. She desired to worship at the famous mountain shrine, and asked the monk if he would be kind enough to be her guide.

[1] Kwannon is the Japanese equivalent of the Chinese Kwanyin.
[2] Lloyd, *Shinran and his Work*, pp. 21, 22.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

"No foot of woman may tread the holy mountain," replied Shinran, greatly shocked. "I cannot take you with me."

The maiden replied: "I am a woman, but I have a human heart which longs for salvation. Am I to be denied what my soul longs for?"

When Shinran suggested a nunnery, his suggestion was met by an unanswerable plea. "I am not a learned woman, but if I were, what good would my learning, immersed in a convent, do to my suffering sisters? I desire to be saved in order that I may save others. I want some simple faith suitable for simple souls; for whilst monks and nuns are poring over sutras of doubtful meaning in the selfish quiet of the monasteries, there are thousands of men and women in Japan perishing for lack of a few satisfying mouthfuls of saving doctrine."

To this attack the young man had nothing to reply, whereupon the lady produced from her pocket a crystal lens and said: "Please take this and keep it. It has the power to collect the sun's rays and focus them on one point, on which it shines with burning heat. Do the same for religion: collect and focus into one point the whole system of the faith, and let that one point be made burning and bright, so that it may kindle into zeal even the simplest and most ignorant soul." [1]

Then she left him. Years afterwards he learned the lady's name: it was she who became his wife, the Princess Burning Crystal.

But before the Shinshu sect came into existence, the monks of the older schools took alarm at the radical changes proposed, and procured the banishment of Shinran and his master. In 1211 both were pardoned, and the younger man founded the "True Sect of the

[1] Lloyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–65 (condensed).

Pure Land." For the next fifty years Shinran itinerated up and down the empire, propagating his doctrines and gathering round him an ever-increasing number of devoted adherents. At the age of eighty-nine, in the year 1262, he passed away.

To-day in the beautiful Hongwanji cathedral in Kyoto the central position is given to Shinran, who might be called the Japanese Luther, the place of honour on the left being reserved for Amida, the chief object of worship. Here the congregation of lay folk, men and women, is led in its devotions by a choir in robes of old gold and priests in black, headed by the hereditary abbot in purple and scarlet; beside the abbot is his son, who will be the next chief of the hierarchy. The intoning of the constantly recurring chorus, "Praise to Amida Buddha," is perhaps followed by an excellent address from one of the priests, and a hymn of gratitude to Amida may be sung:—

> Eternal Father, on whose breast
> We sinful children find our rest,
> Thy mind in us is perfected
> When on all men thy love we shed;
> So we in faith repeat thy praise,
> And gratefully live out our days.[1]

With regard to Amida Buddha himself, the basis of the cult rests on his wonderful vow. Countless ages ago, it is said, he was a powerful monarch. Giving up his throne he lived as an ascetic, and having attained to bodhisatship, made a series of prayer-vows, undertaking to become a Buddha for the sake of the salvation of all beings, and in order to establish a heavenly kingdom of perfect blessedness for all creatures. Here is the famous Vow of Amida: "When I become Buddha, let all living beings of the ten regions of the universe maintain a confident and joyful faith in me;

[1] Saunders, *Buddhism in the Modern World*, p. 59.

let them concentrate their longings on a rebirth in my Paradise ; and let them call upon my name, though it be only ten times or less : then, provided only that they have not been guilty of the five heinous sins, and have not slandered or vilified the true religion, the desire of such beings to be born in my Paradise will surely be fulfilled. If this be not so, may I never receive the perfect enlightenment of Buddhahood." [1]

In accordance with this vow the followers of Amida hold that it is not through personal merit that Paradise may be gained, but "through trust in that Buddha's abounding might and pity, and through faithful repetitions of his holy name." [2] A man who calls upon that name for even a single day may face death with serenity, because Amida, "attended by a host of celestial bodhisats, will assuredly appear before his dying eyes, and will carry him away to a joyful rebirth" [3] in the Pure Land. The journey to the Pure Land is often represented in woodcuts, showing a crowded boat sailing over the bitter sea of human misery under the charge of Kwanyin to the sacred lake. The surface of the lake is dotted with lotus-flowers, each enfolding the spiritual body of one of the blessed who has gained immortality. The use of this flower [4] as the symbol of salvation is traced back to the words of Sakyamuni : "Just as a lotus, born in water, bred in water, overcomes water and is not defiled by water, even so I, born in the world and bred in the world, have now overcome the world." [5]

It is important to notice that, although in the Amidist schools mere faith and the repetition of the

[1] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 99. [3] *Ibid.*
[4] The symbolism of the lotus, the flower on which Sakyamuni is usually represented as sitting, is not confined to Asia. The funeral boat, which in olden times crossed the Nile in Egypt bearing the embalmed body, had this flower for its sign.
[5] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

sacred name are emphasized in an extreme form, good works are not neglected. In the portion of the Shinshu creed specially meant for the laity, the believers say: "We must, during our whole life, observe the laws which are appointed for our duty." [1] Moreover, the candidate for Paradise "who has virtue and good works to his credit, as well as a strong faith, will be placed in a higher class than one who has gained Paradise through faith alone." [2] Besides, the realistic pictures of the Ten Courts of Hell painted on the walls of many temples, revolting though they appear, are obviously intended to enforce a lesson in morals. It may be added that there is one great difference between the Buddhist theory of future punishment and the view usually considered orthodox among Christians. According to the latter view the punishments of hell are eternal: it is otherwise with the Buddhists, who hold "that there is no eternity in things evil, and that the whole universe will ultimately enter into Buddhahood." [3]

Having dealt with several outstanding features both of the Mahayana creed and of its cultus in the Far East, we are in a position to observe with some measure of insight the changes which are taking place to-day. We cannot but feel that a day of grace is dawning, when the votaries of a religion begin to hark back to its founder. For he is the vital personality from whom the spiritual movement received its original form and impetus, a greater man, in all probability, than any of his successors. It is a long way back from the magnificent product of the idealizing imagination, Amida, the Lord of the Western Heaven, to the historical Indian prince. The present revival of Buddhism in China has for one of its characteristics

[1] Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[2] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 105. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

the rediscovery of the life and teaching of the founder.

In the month of May 1923 there was celebrated in Peking and elsewhere the festival of the Birthday of Sakyamuni. Through the kindness of Dr. Gilbert Reid, I was present at the Buddhist Conference, connected with this festival, in the great Fa Yuan Temple [1] in South Peking. Passing under arched decorations, we wound our way through several courtyards to the open quadrangle covered with straw matting, in which the meetings were being held. It was not strictly a conference, but a continuous series of lectures and addresses carried on for a month. The quadrangle was packed with a mixed crowd of some two hundred men and women of various social grades, including thirty or forty priests and novices. Children were free to move about, even on the platform, where they upset no one's equilibrium. In front of the platform was an altar covered with yellow embroidered satin, on which were placed two gilded Buddhas, a higher and a lower, with lighted candles on either side and an incense brazier in the centre. A prayer-stool on the floor was also adorned with embroidered satin of the proper yellow shade. Above the images sat the benevolent-looking Abbot in his yellow robes. He was chairman of the meeting. It was through the efforts of this remarkable man that the conference was called together.[2] The speaking that afternoon included addresses by Dr. Reid and the chairman, as well as an exposition by a scholarly layman of a biography of Sakyamuni, which he had recently published.

The Fa Yuan Temple is dedicated to "Kwanyin of the Thousand Hands"; she therefore occupies the

[1] Fa Yuan = The Fountain of the Law.

[2] He had succeeded in obtaining the signatures of supporters to the number of three thousand, though these gentlemen did not guarantee the cost of the effort, which would amount to about £600.

central shrine. In an upper storey, to which we were afterwards conducted, we found an astonishing array of three hundred images of all sorts and sizes. There was an unexpected cleanliness and order visible everywhere. When we were introduced to the library, I could hardly credit my eyes, so huge was the number of the volumes displayed in their covered sets. There must have been a mistake, however, in the figure mentioned by the Abbot, or in my hearing of it. He said that, including many other books not in the library, there were 60,000 volumes belonging to the Temple. Someone else later mentioned 10,000, which seemed a much more likely figure. The Temple treasures had mostly been gathered together by the present Abbot, who told me a little of his history. In early years, attending a Christian school, he was first a Protestant and then a Catholic, remaining a Christian for three years up till the age of nineteen, when he was dissatisfied in his soul and left his home to become a monk. Subsequently he travelled in Tibet, India and Siam. I may add that he is widely respected as a man of learning and sincerity.

On the following afternoon I addressed the conference by invitation. A notice informed the audience that my subject, about which I had not been consulted, was the "Principles of Buddhism." Since the opportunity was unique, I had tried to prepare for it by thought and prayer. Rarely have I had a more eager and attentive audience. For this there were more reasons than one. The Abbot, being a southerner, used a dialect not readily understood in Peking. Besides, these Buddhist friends seemed not to know how to state their case in public, speaking above the heads of most of those present, and in voices that did not carry far. The audience was at once arrested, when on standing up to address them I spoke in

Pekingese directly to the back benches in the quadrangle. All chatting in the crowd ceased. Then in the middle of my speech a procession of priests chanting with instrumental accompaniment began to file slowly along one side of the quadrangle. At this I paused, remaining silent until the music had become faint enough not to interfere with us. The people seemed relieved when the procession passed.

May I give you a brief outline of that half-hour's address? "In thanking the Abbot for his kind invitation to address you, I would congratulate you on getting back to Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, whose birthday you are met to celebrate. Known as the Light of Asia, he taught the Four Truths and the Eightfold Path. The Diamond Scripture tells us that Buddha is the heart of man. From that heart, the biography of Sakyamuni says, there may issue three kinds of poison. What is the remedy? Yesterday in the Peking Christian University, Marshal Feng ended his address to the students with these words: 'Trust in God.' Now I am a Christian, and I ask your permission to state what I believe. One evening in Fakumen I heard an old woman at the Rock Temple calling piteously again and again, 'A-mi-to-fo.' Sakyamuni left out God, but the human heart needs God. Hence Amida was discovered to fill the vacant place. Jesus said: 'Blessed are the empty-hearted, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Sakyamuni, who only knew the first part of that saying, prepared the way for Christ and His kingdom. Emptiness alone will not save us. The kingdom of heaven is to come into our empty hearts. To this end God the Father who loves us, sent His Son to live and die for us. Looking at the Cross we see how God suffers along with us and how He yearns to save us, through Him who is the Light, not of Asia only, but of the whole world."

When I tell you that there was not a trace of hostility observable in the audience, but rather the reverse, you will agree with me that I had abundant cause to be thankful to God for His answer to prayer. I asked the Abbot whether I had said anything unsuitable, and he replied : " Not at all." The meeting separated, and I went with the Abbot into a large guest-room. There was so much I wished to learn, but alas ! owing to the Abbot's Hunanese dialect I lost a great deal of his conversation.

" Do you agree," I inquired, " with that quotation I gave from Marshal Feng : ' Trust in God ' ? "

" No, I do not," replied the Abbot. " First, because the words were spoken by a soldier whose work is the slaughter of men ; and second, because it is too simple and too speedy a way of reaching God."

" What is Nirvana ? "

The Abbot's answer began with the usual, " Not life and not death," and then no attentiveness on my part could make sense of what followed. One wanted to groan. Calling for a certain book, he remarked that he was about to give a month's lectures on the teaching of the book concerning the future life. I could not help feeling sorry for the people who would attend the lectures. They would indeed have one compensation, for if they failed to profit by the exposition, they could not but enjoy watching the Abbot's benign smile.

Time passed. Guests came in to discuss plans for making the conference a success. Two plans were proposed. The outer courts being thronged in the daytime with children and their parents, buying and selling in the usual manner of a temple fair, one idea was to put a tax on each street-stall. The other suggestion mentioned was to send out notices inviting the public to come and burn incense.

Still I sat on. The Abbot, being engaged on business, showed his politeness by ordering supper for me. Instead of taking the hint, I stayed and partook of a *recherché* vegetarian meal, served by a priest. The first number of a monthly magazine, called *The Light of Buddha*, was presented to me.

At last I rose to go. The Abbot escorted me to the outermost gate on the electric-lighted street, and I looked in vain for the rickshaw runner who had brought me from the Legation Quarter a long way off, and whom I had told to wait. Apparently he had given me up and departed. To this day I owe that man for my fare. And when the misdemeanour was confessed in an account of the Buddhist Conference before the reverend fathers of the Presbyterian Synod of Manchuria, the Chinese Moderator interrupted me with the witty remark: "Never mind. It's well known that Manchurians in Peking ride free of charge!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE MEANING OF THE LIGHT OF ASIA

THE BUDDHIST REVIVAL

In all the universe
There is but one Doctrine,
There can be no second nor third,
Beyond preaching God's Goodness;
The rest are merely symbols—
Shadows of the True.

The Lotus Scripture Essence (RICHARD).

Not by flattering our appetites; no, by awakening the Heroic that slumbers in every heart, can any Religion gain followers.

CARLYLE, *On Heroes.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE MEANING OF THE LIGHT OF ASIA

THE BUDDHIST REVIVAL

UNDER what political circumstances does religion flourish best? The answer to this question can be given at least in one particular: the background of religious success is adversity. It is when things are going wrong, when the social and political fabric is showing signs of collapse, that men are most inclined to turn away from the world to God. Instances of this truth lie to hand in many periods of history. The faith of Israel only began to blossom after the loss of the nation's political power. Christianity gained its primary hold shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed and Judæa devastated by the mailed fist of a ruthless conqueror. The break-up of feudal society opened the path for the Protestant Reformers. In our own island the tenacity with which the majority of the people cling to Catholicism is doubtless in part due to the long years of insecurity, during which their religion afforded a sure haven of peace.

A glance round the world to-day furnishes remarkable corroboration of this principle. France in her prosperity and power shows fewer signs of religious awakening than Germany in the extreme bitterness of her distress. Russia affords the clearest evidence of a revival of faith, following on a vast upheaval of the state. We all crave for security; the motto "Safety

First " has a perennial force. And yet in our secret hearts each of us, taught by the New Testament and our own experience, knows beyond a doubt that Christianity is specially suited to a world of change, tribulation and loss.

Among the causes of the new movements at work in the ethnic faiths of China, the chaos of governmental authority during recent years is undoubtedly an operative factor. Familiar landmarks in the structure of society are vanishing; old sanctions for conduct, tending to give way, are not speedily replaced by new standards. When the solid earth of immemorial custom begins to quake under men's feet, their hearts faint for fear of what may follow. Not only so, but in high places the corruption of official life spreads like a canker far and wide. Honest men are inclined to turn away in disgust from the public service of their country. The circumstances of the times, therefore, are driving men of thought and earnestness towards religion, in the hope of obtaining from it the consolation denied to them elsewhere.

The reform movement of Chinese Buddhism, referred to in the last chapter, began before the end of the Manchu Empire. New projects and ideas being in the air, a Ningpo abbot bethought him of the uplift of the monastic order, and to that end in 1910 founded the Chinese National Buddhist Society with an ambitious programme. Two of the society's rules were: (*a*) That only those who had had three years of theological training should be admitted into the order, and (*b*) that monks were forbidden to perform funeral services for hire. The second of these provisions was a drastic innovation, for however derogatory to the dignity of the order, and however mixed up these ceremonies are with extraneous traditional practices, one of the main sources of Buddhist influence is the

performance of the ritual for the dead. At such times the monks are in popular demand.

This first revival was short-lived. The adoption of a policy of stringent supervision of Buddhism after the revolution of 1911 led to the National Buddhist Society being suppressed. The regulations promulgated through Parliament by the first President of the Republic in 1915 included taxation of temple property and the subjection of even preaching services to police interference. Notwithstanding the liberty and equality of treatment promised under the constitution of the Republic to all forms of religion, these regulations were intended to bear heavily on the Buddhists, whose temples far outnumber those of any other cult. There is little cause for satisfaction on our part, when we find places of worship, formerly thronged with pilgrims at the festivals, now turned into barracks—the altars, it may be, serving as beds for the soldiers, and the floor-space stacked with rifles and other paraphernalia of warfare. Writing of a famous monastery in the suburbs of Shanghai where this has happened, Professor Tsu, a distinguished Christian theologian, says: "To see this is truly to see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, but military necessity knows no sanctity."

Though the first attempt at the improvement of the Buddhist organization and of the standard of monastic life came to grief, it was very different with the second and more deeply spiritual effort. No official tyranny can put a stop to the kind of reformation that is now in progress.

The course of my inquiries into present-day conditions led to an interview with Judge Mei of the Provincial Court of Tsinanfu, one of the leaders of the modern movement. As we approached the yamen, Dr. Stearns, the head of the University Hospital,

noticed the judge, who had just passed us in a rickshaw. On being greeted, the judge, a very plainly dressed gentleman in an old black felt hat and elastic-sided boots, immediately got down from the rickshaw and walked back with us to his yamen. Inviting us into his library which was full of Buddhist literature, he placed himself most courteously at our disposal. When we had met him he was on his way to a men's class, to which he gives religious lectures two or three times a week.

Speaking with the utmost frankness, he told us of the Buddhist bookshops scattered over the country. An official, who died near Nanking about eleven years ago, left property for the spread of such literature, for which there are publishing houses in most of the great cities. Judge Mei had been asked to take charge of the bookshops for all China. When I told him I had bought a Buddhist Catechism in Moukden —a fair-sized volume, by the way, and not at all easy —he remarked: "Oh, I wrote that. It is only an elementary book." On account of the judge's religious scruples forbidding him from taking life, his judicial duties do not include criminal cases involving the death sentence. In personal habits he is a vegetarian.

As for the beliefs of this unassuming scholar, they appeared to involve an idealist philosophy somewhat on the lines of Fichte: all things arise from the "free activity of the Ego." [1] Speaking in metaphor it is as if we dreamed the universe, and hence the universe came to be.

After listening to his exposition of his own faith, I inquired: "How can you do without God?"

"Your God," was his reply, "is said to have made all things in six days. This is not in accordance with science."

[1] Hastings, *Encyc. of Religion and Ethics*, vol. v, p. 907.

A Christian, as we know, is under no obligation to oppose scientific truth, and I told him my own view, and then proceeded to explain to him my need for God, present by His Spirit in the heart. Eagerly, wistfully he listened without any sign of dissent. Watching his straightforward expression, one could not help feeling that he, too, was in need of such a faith, if by any means he could attain to it.

Asked about the next world, he said his hope was to have a better life in the future than he had at present. Apparently Nirvana, in any sense of ceasing to exist, did not enter into his conception of the life to come. On the subject of sin I learned that it meant a stupid, in contrast with an intelligent, heart. The stupid heart will gradually be got rid of. Perhaps the most pathetic statement made by this prominent Buddhist layman during that absorbing interview, was that in all China the number of those who comprehend the teaching of the sect to which he belongs—and it is reckoned one of the main subdivisions—viz. the "School that exhibits the nature and meaning of the Buddhist written doctrines," is not more than a hundred or thereabouts. Still less optimistic was his further remark that the number of Buddhists who understand their own religion is one out of ten thousand or twenty thousand. We came away full of admiration for our friend's transparent sincerity, and yet sorrowful to think of his groping unaided after a Father, the revelation of whose love in the person of the Son he has hitherto failed to see.

That Judge Mei's elevated type of character is by no means singular among the Buddhist reformers, will appear from a consideration of the chief leader of the group, Tai Hsü, a learned and saintly monk. Beginning his monastic career as a lad among the hills of Chekiang Province, he was ordained in Tientsin, and

later went to Japan to pursue his studies. In an autobiographical sketch issued in 1920 he says: "Towards the last days of the Manchu Dynasty, the wish gradually formed within me of applying the law of Buddha for the harmonizing of the philosophies of ancient and modern times and of the east and the west, and of leading the nations of the whole world to follow the teachings of Sakyamuni. Since then during the past decade this wish has not for one moment been permitted to leave my mind. Then the European war broke out. Added to the rottenness of the inward life of man was the brutal struggle of the outward world. I was convinced of the magnitude of human calamity, which, like a wagon-load of hay on fire, could not be extinguished with a cupful of water. Since it was ordained that I should wait until the ripe time to carry out my wish, I decided to make use of the waiting to exercise my religion (by contemplation), and so I shut myself in Putoo Island for three years." [1] This island, it may be explained, is the seat of one of the principal Buddhist sanctuaries in China.

At Putoo he was persuaded to go to Shanghai and organize a society for the promotion of Buddhism, which he did under the name of the "Perfect Enlightenment Association," with the following purpose: "To propagate the essence of Mahayana Buddhism, so that the wicked may be led into lovingkindness, the selfish into righteousness, the wise to rejoice in truth, the strong to love of virtue; and to transform this war-worn suffering world into a place of peace and happiness."

The requirements for membership in the association are placed high. In addition to believing the Three Treasures, the Buddha, the Law and the Order, the candidate must take the Four Great Vows and observe

[1] *China To-day*, p. 99.

the Ten Commandments. The Four Vows are: To save all living beings, to destroy all passions, to know the law, and to teach others to know it. Of the Ten Commandments there are different forms. The original code began with five, which were to be binding on all Gotama's followers :—

1. Not to take life.
2. Not to steal.
3. Not to commit adultery.
4. Not to tell lies.
5. Not to drink intoxicants.

The layman who wishes to advance beyond these initial commands may add three more, which for monks are compulsory :—

6. Not to take food except at specified times.
7. To abstain from dancing, music and stage plays.
8. Not to wear garlands or use perfumes.

By the acceptance of these rules, combined with a celibate life, laymen may join the monastic order for a limited time. There remain two further instructions applicable to those who become full members of the order :—

9. To sleep on a mat spread on the ground.
10. Not to possess gold or silver.

The main aim of these Ten Commandments has always been to train the believer by means of ethical prohibitions and severe simplification of his daily habits, in order that he may gain the power of self-control and inward watchfulness, with a view to the spiritual labour of meditation, in which saving value chiefly consists. In an advanced form meditation leads to trance, and from trance to joy, ecstasy, and complete calm. Beyond the forms of meditation, of

which the essential note is concentration, there is the highest attainment of all, based on wisdom or intellectual discipline. To this belongs a special trance, the trance of cessation.

It is obvious that a regulated system of this kind can only be adhered to by those devoting their lives to it. For general sympathizers some other instructions have to be substituted. Hence, instead of the last six commandments of the ancient Buddhist Code, the following six are employed by the new Enlightenment Society: "Not to exaggerate, not to slander, not to be double-tongued, not to covet, not to be angry, and not to be heretical." [1] If the candidate for membership is not able to observe all the prohibitions, he is enjoined first to select one or two, and then gradually to increase them. Particular practices regarding study, fasting, penitence, charity, and religious gatherings, are in addition recommended.

The organ of the movement is a widely-circulated monthly magazine of fine literary quality, called *The Sound of the Tide*, edited by Tai Hsü himself. In the spring of 1920 the magazine published statements from three *literati* who, having served the Republic in government appointments, had through the preaching of Tai Hsü renounced the world and entered the monastic order. "World-salvation," says one of the writers, "requires the Law of Buddha. But this cannot be accomplished without earnestly and speedily proclaiming the Law among men. To do this the best way is for me to strengthen my will, study the doctrine, and thus prepare myself to give my personal testimony of faith. Hence the primary step of entering the Order. It is not dissimilar to my previous action of leaving home and studying the military art to prepare myself for the task of saving

[1] *China To-day*, p. 97.

my own country. The difference is that now my aim is the salvation of all living creatures." [1]

In a later issue of *The Sound of the Tide* there was printed a very touching letter to the editor from an educated young woman. In it she told how, becoming convinced that the Law of Buddha was the only true and most lovable religion, she vowed at the age of nineteen never to marry, but to give her life to Buddha. Her parents prevented her from shaving off her hair and becoming a nun, which she considered the most happy thing for a girl to do. She expostulated with the great monk, the editor, for saying that the best way was to practise enlightenment without forsaking the world. Three of her young friends were of the same mind as herself in wishing to escape the world's sorrow by becoming nuns. But after reading *The Sound of the Tide* they found that to forsake the world really meant to benefit others, not themselves. Her will to be a nun had grown so strong that she determined to shave off her hair before the year ended, hoping to reform the nunnery which she proposed to enter.

The task of purifying the rather inert mass of the Buddhist priesthood might well seem appalling. In China it is estimated that there are four hundred thousand monks and ten thousand nuns. The majority of these pursue their conventional routine, repeating the sutras without understanding, and trusting to the "magic passport—'Praise to Amida Buddha'—for entry into the 'Western Paradise' after death." [2] But Tai Hsü is a man on fire, clear in his own convictions, and, though disagreeing with our religion, friendly towards the missionaries. What are Tai Hsü's beliefs? In the first place, belonging as he does to the Contemplative School,[3]

[1] *China To-day*, pp. 104, 105 (condensed.)
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[3] See p. 147.

he is opposed to idolatry and tolerates it only as an accommodation to the weakness of the people. The extensive plan he has proposed for the organization of the Buddhist Church, embracing preaching-chapels in every city, several model monasteries, orphanages and lecture bureaus, includes a national university, into the museum of which he would have all images removed. Then, with regard to ultimate things, Tai Hsü holds that Gotama Buddha is a saviour only in the sense that he is an outstanding example of those who took the path to Buddhahood, or perfect enlightenment. Following his lead, we, too, may become Buddhas. To criticize the teachings of Gotama is permissible, since knowledge is progressive. Besides the Buddhas that men may become, there is the essence or sum total of all the Buddhas ; to be absorbed into this Universal Buddha is our goal and salvation. In contrast to the Christian God, who is conceived of as perfect and complete before the Creation, the Universal Buddha is a future consummation, not separate and distinct from man and nature.

Tai Hsü is now president of the newly established Buddhist College at Wuchang on the Yangtze in Central China. In this busy city of Wuchang the birthday of Sakyamuni was celebrated in May, 1923, with more *éclat* than in the capital of the Republic. Besides attending the main service in Hankow across the river, the Provincial Governor ordered all magistrates within his jurisdiction to suspend punishments for one day, and to prohibit the slaughter of animals. During a five-days' fast, which the Governor instituted, some 13,000 lb. of eels were bought daily to illustrate the doctrine of the release of life by dropping the fish back into the Yangtze, an act of grace which is said to have met with the hearty approval of the fishermen.

In our handling of the various phases of Chinese

faith and practice you will probably have noticed a distinction which frequently appears between the educated thinker and the man in the street. Whilst there is no dividing line between these two human types, what appeals to the one is likely to leave the other untouched. The worship of images is a case in point. When we were buying some literature from the librarian of the Temple of Ten Thousand Years in Moukden, a former government official who had taken the monastic vows, he remarked: "Buddhism is without a god. It is therefore quite in accord with science." On the other hand, when I asked the abbot of the Fa Yuan Temple in Peking his opinion of the use of images,[1] he replied that if a man in an angry unforgiving spirit burned incense and prayed to Kwanyin, and afterwards came away ready to forgive his enemy, the efficacy of the image was proved. He knew of actual results of this kind happening.

Long ago a remarkable defence of image-worship was penned by Maximus of Tyre: "God Himself, the father and fashioner of all that is, greater than time and eternity, is unutterable by any voice, not to be seen by any eye. But we, being unable to apprehend His essence, use the help of sounds and names and pictures, of beaten gold and ivory and silver, of plants and rivers, mountain peaks and torrents, yearning for the knowledge of Him, and in our weakness naming all that is beautiful in this world after His nature—just as happens to earthly lovers. To them the most beautiful sight will be the actual lineaments of the beloved, but for remembrance sake they will be happy in the sight of a lyre, a little spear, a chair perhaps,

[1] In one of the languages of West Africa, "'idem' means the self, or the individual personality. 'Idem' is also the word for an idol—surely a proof that worship is not offered to the material image so much as to the spiritual personality presumed to inhabit it."—D. H. O'Neill, in *Qua Iboe Quarterly*.

or anything in the world that wakens the memory of the beloved. Let men know what is divine, let them know; that is all. If a Greek is stirred to the remembrance of God by the art of Pheidias, an Egyptian by paying worship to animals, another man by a river, another by fire—I have no anger for their divergences; only let them know, let them love, let them remember."[1] There speaks the benignant philosopher, with tolerant eyes gazing from his seclusion upon the strange foibles of the multitude. Whether or not we agree with his argument, we cannot but admire its lofty tone.

If we endeavour to analyse the motive behind the ancient practice of idol-worship, we find that that which man is unable fully to secure, a prosperous guarded successful life for himself and his family, he instinctively implores from his gods, performing at their altars the ritual duties taught by tradition to be requisite in order to gain their favour. Along with a willingness to help men, or at the least a willingness to be propitiated, the god is for the most part regarded as a superior government official. Dignity and power are his attributes, rather than moral character. Once when Fakumen was threatened with an invasion of brigands, who were reported to have already come into the town, an old lady living in our street seized her private idol and threw it out of the house. Having failed to furnish protection to his client, the unfortunate god was of no further use. It follows then that what the worshipper hopes to obtain is nothing higher than the material blessings which a human government, given control over the forces of nature, might confer on its obedient subjects. The condemnation of a religious custom, stretching back to the forgotten

[1] Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, pp. 98, 99 (condensed).

beginnings of social life upon the earth, rests on its low, and occasionally depraved, ideal of human welfare —on that and the loss of unity of purpose through homage to many diverse deities instead of One.

Looked at from without, image-worship would seem to be an integral factor of Buddhism and Taoism, and also, even though in a far less degree, of Confucianism. In their religious views and habits, indeed, the multitude stand on the one side, Tai Hsü and the Revival Movement on the other. Of the mundane matters dear to the heart of the people, the Movement, being concerned with the higher life of the soul, takes little or no account. And although the abolition of idols would require a miracle, at the same time the current of China's religion is more likely to be determined by the educated 10 per cent. of the population, or rather by the men of character and conviction within that small minority, than by the illiterate 90 per cent., who are besides remarkably amenable to leadership.

What direction will that current take? Will the religious awakening, accompanied by organized reform, suffice to win the victory for Gotama in the conflict of faiths in the Far East? Instead of attempting to frame an answer to this vitally important question, let us rather prepare the ground by probing a little deeper into the secret of the attraction of Buddhism, the source of its continued power. Of that power there cannot be a doubt. In Burma and Ceylon, Europeans are being won to Gotama's doctrine, while thousands in Germany and on the Pacific coast of America are joining the ranks of his followers. The Maha Bodhi Society of Ceylon, founded over thirty years ago, supports schools, educates monks for missionary work, sends out preachers, and dispenses charity. "The project dearest to its heart is the

replanting of Buddhism in the land of its birth." [1] Two years ago the corner-stone of a Buddhist university was laid by the Governor of the United Provinces, at the place near Benares, where Gotama first set in motion the Wheel of the Law.

The foremost classical scholar in China, Liang Chi-chao, at one time a Cabinet Minister, has come forward with a scheme for the founding of a university specially to study Mahayana Buddhism, which formerly he as an orthodox Confucianist would have been ashamed to advocate. A city in North China not long since had a Buddhist temple renovated at the cost of £25,000, collected from among the people. Orphanages are supported by Buddhist zeal in Peking and Ningpo. A branch of the Young Men's Buddhist Association was started in Peking in 1923.

Some of these activities excel more in promise than in performance. And the sum total of those just enumerated forms a mere bagatelle in comparison with the religious educational and social service of the Christian Church. Of much more value than any other feature of this revival in China is the work done in the small Buddhist College in Nanking—founded by a layman, mainly with an intellectual interest—and especially in the college already mentioned at Wuchang, higher up the Yangtze, where Tai Hsü expounds the sutras to classes composed chiefly of monks. Yet even Tai Hsü's aim is not primarily missionary. Only indirectly does he hope to spread his faith among the masses of the people. On the basis of thorough knowledge he wishes to explain the truth of Buddhism, believing that this will suffice to ensure success.

Without the stimulus of Japan, however, this great Asiatic religion might in China have become as mori-

[1] *The Chinese Social and Political Review*, July 1924, art. by J. B. Pratt, p. 4.

bund as it is in Korea. The creed of a conquering nation sometimes wins multitudes of converts among the conquered. It is the very opposite with Korea. At the corner of two well-made roads in Pingyang, the former capital of the peninsula, there stands a brand-new Temple of the Great Enlightenment. Wandering through the open door into the spacious hall, and taking off one's shoes, one finds a scrupulously clean interior, almost empty. Stepping across the soft straw-carpeted floor to the altar, one sees below the placid gilt figure a printed paper slip with the inscription, "Worthy to be worshipped, Sakyamuni, the Great Gracious Lord of Religion." The temple is Japanese. In that busy city I did not come across a single temple in active use by the Koreans. But there are twenty-one Christian churches in the city and the environs, and some of these churches can seat one thousand five hundred to two thousand. Buddhism is almost everywhere dead among the Koreans. On the other hand, it is very much alive both among the enlightened and the backward classes of the Japanese. For the service of the Shinshu sect, upwards of five hundred young priests are being carefully trained. Not long ago in Kyoto a new temple was built, costing nearly a million pounds sterling, and its massive timbers were transported by ropes made of women's hair, voluntarily sacrificed by hundreds of thousands of devotees.

Realizing then that the Buddhist Revival, though by no means universal in the Far East, is nevertheless real and significant, let us ask ourselves : What is the secret of this religion's attractiveness and power ? The secret, if we can discover it, will doubtless be many-sided. Among the various reasons which help to furnish a reply to the question, we may mention four :—

1. The patriotic cry, " Asia for the Asiatics," lends its support most readily to Buddhism, the strongest indigenous, and at the same time international, religion in the East.

2. While the short-cut to Paradise through faith in Amida makes the most popular appeal of any of the Mahayana creeds, for the *literati* in China the philosophical side of Buddhism, resembling Bergson's " creative evolution " in a less scientific form, provides the chief attraction.

3. The recovery of the historical Gotama, through the work of scholars translating the original Buddhist classics, has given a great impetus towards reform.

4. And finally there remains a motive which perhaps approaches nearest to the heart of the matter ; it is what Sabatier has called " the imperious desire for immolation which lies in the depth of every soul." Which of us, seekers after God, has not at some time felt the call to gain freedom by giving up money, or books, or comfort, or home ? We long to assert the superiority of the soul by actual escape from life's hindering impedimenta.

It may seem futile to hold up for admiration the monastic system of the Christian Church—futile for a Protestant who is not himself a monk. And yet with what pride do we look back on the long and splendid history of these communities, particularly in the West ! No theoretical proof of the wrongness of the system, no sad story of disgrace, decline and fall, can quench our admiration for a discipline, involving lifelong heroism in the cause of the Highest. How often have the monks saved the Church and stood guard over a tottering civilization ! Who does not love the greatest of them all, St. Francis of Assisi, the messenger of the Gospel to the poor ? Nor is the ideal of renunciation,

as sanctioned by our Lord, a thing of the past in the Christian Church. Among Protestants the ideal is clothed in less conspicuous forms than among Catholics, but in some missions at home and abroad, as well as in very many of our smaller Presbyterian congregations, the opportunity for the Christian worker to exercise this gift lies daily to his hand. The trouble is that owing to the history of Protestantism and the contamination of a social system, the basis of which is the antithesis of renunciation, this great ideal is largely forgotten among us or despised.

And now in drawing to the close of our study of Buddhism, allow me to bring to your notice an experiment by one who has the courage of his convictions in starting a new semi-monastic community, called "The Christian Mission to Buddhists," which has been spoken of as "the most unique and adventurous piece of mission work in China." After a term of evangelistic service under the Norwegian Missionary Society, Karl Ludwig Reichelt became Vice-President and Professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis in the Lutheran Theological Seminary near Hankow. Having made a thorough study of Buddhism and written extensively on the subject, he determined to devote himself entirely to the winning of Buddhists, a task he had for years desired to undertake. From the Church's beaten track to step aside to unrecognized paths of service is often easier abroad than at home. But in this case Professor Reichelt had to hoe a lonely furrow. Lecturing in Northern Europe and the United States, he gained much sympathy and a moderate amount of financial support. No missionary society however offered its broad back for the burden of the new endeavour. Consequently our adventurer marched on in faith. Accompanied by his wife and a Norwegian colleague, whom he had secured, the Professor settled

in a small house in Nanking in November 1922. At one time funds were so low that Mr. Reichelt sold his summer bungalow in order to make ends meet. His own society has now definitely accepted responsibility for his salary, better quarters have been secured, and a piece of land bought outside the city on a hill overlooking the Yangtze, where a large institute is to be built.

From the very first the monks were attracted to the little house, whose rooms were adorned with scrolls and pictures chosen to suit their taste. Among the hundreds of Buddhist and Taoist priests from all parts of China who have visited the Mission, some have stayed for months. Ten novices, who are orphans handed over by the temples, are being trained in Christian principles.

Coming to the kernel of the experiment, a brotherhood has been formed, which in 1923 included six adult members enrolled as catechumens. The purpose underlying the venture is thus given in the regulations of the Institute: "While the brotherhood has not for its aim a life of celibacy, still it is very desirable that a few with special grace and call from God should freely give themselves to such an unhindered work of love and service among their fellow-men for the sake of the Kingdom." The members of the brotherhood have all things in common. Now and then one of them sells some piece of property for the benefit of all, and when any gift is offered, it is openly received by all. The meals eaten in common are of simple vegetarian food. Each member makes it a point of honour to live on the least possible.

One of the brothers, ready for baptism in 1923, was a Buddhist monk, who three years before had vowed neither to shave nor bathe, and had locked himself up in a cell communicating with the outside world

only through a little window. Now he is Chinese secretary of the Mission, since he is a beautiful writer and had been secretary of several of the larger monasteries in Nanking.

Not only do Buddhist priests frequent the Mission, but Taoist priests as well. One of the latter, educated at a military school, afterwards determined to go on pilgrimage, and vowed to visit all China's holy places. On his way from Nanking to Shanghai he heard a strange voice in his heart summoning him back to Nanking. He did not understand the meaning of the voice until he happened to hear of a new institute for monks. Entering the institute, a tall, stalwart figure, he asked to serve as gateman in return for board and lodging. Bearing heavy loads under the hot sun and instructing the novices every morning in physical drill, this pious monk was coming to understand more of the meaning of Christ.

With regard to the teaching given in the "Brotherhood of Religious Friends," there is no compromise, for the aim of the Institute is definitely stated to be "to lead Buddhists of all classes into a living faith in Jesus Christ as the only one in whom the profoundest ideals of the higher Buddhism find their complete fulfilment." In the chapel the form of worship includes portions of the Mahayana ritual considered to be in perfect harmony with Christian doctrine. After a service at which he was present, one of the secretaries of the National Christian Council wrote: "Never in China have I seen deeper reverence than in that little simple room."

What is the attitude of the leaders of the Buddhist Revival to this new Christian venture of faith? After Tai Hsü had written an article attacking Christianity and the work of the Brotherhood, he met the head of the Mission. So changed did his point of view then

become, that he invited Mr. Reichelt to address a "World Conference of Buddhists," held in the summer of 1923, giving him full liberty to speak as a Christian missionary. At the close of the address, which was on the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, Tai Hsü, the chairman of the Conference, thanked the speaker, and explained what *Tao* or "the Word" meant for Buddhists. He then added: "Jesus Christ is the incarnated *Tao*. This I now understand. But for us the chief thing is that the *Tao* can also be incarnated in us."

In a letter to me the learned and brave Norwegian pioneer wrote as follows: "The work is difficult, but inspiring beyond imagination. We have already had unspeakable joy in seeing deeply religious people finding the fulfilment of their yearning hearts in Jesus Christ as the Logos from Eternity, the λόγος σπερματικός, sending out beams of glory through all ages and in every country, and especially in Asia. Our work is therefore strictly Christocentric, but consequently very broadminded."

Could you and I have a finer motto for *our* work than this: *Strictly Christocentric, and consequently very broadminded*?

CHAPTER IX

THE HERO AS PROPHET

CHINESE MOHAMMEDANISM

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!
The compassionate, the merciful!
King on the day of reckoning!
Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help.
Guide Thou us on the straight path,
The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious;
—with whom Thou are not angry, and who do not go astray.

Koran, Sura I (RODWELL).

If you would win the great masses, give them the truth in rounded form, neat and clear, in visible and tangible guise. This lesson is taught by all history, and not least by the first century of Islam.

KUENEN, *National Religions and Universal Religions.*

CHAPTER IX

THE HERO AS PROPHET

CHINESE MOHAMMEDANISM

At the Mohammedan Tract and Book Depot in the Punjaub for the price of two annas you can buy a copy of *The Hero as Prophet*, by Thomas Carlyle. By its choice of this famous essay for propaganda purposes the New Islam Movement in India has shown its wisdom. No better introduction to the study of Islam could be desired. Too rarely have we the privilege of hearing one religious genius expounded by another. And unless we can see something of the greatness of the Arabian Prophet and feel the urgency of his message, we shall remain mere uncomprehending spectators of what was, with a single exception, the most amazing phenomenon in the history of man.

Mohammed's first illumination or revelation occurred in his fortieth year, during his annual period of fasting and meditation in the month of Ramadan. Let us hear how Carlyle describes this world-shaking event: "He one day told his wife Kadijah . . . that by the unspeakable special favour of Heaven he had now found it all out; was in doubt and darkness no longer, but saw it all. That all these Idols and Formulas were nothing, miserable bits of wood; that there was One God in and over all; and we must leave all Idols, and look to Him. That God is great; that there is nothing else great; He is the Reality. . . .

He made us at first, sustains us yet; we and all things are but the shadow of Him; a transitory garment veiling the Eternal Splendour. '*Allah akbar*, God is great,'—and then also '*Islam*,' that we must *submit* to God. That our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever He do to us. For this world and for the other! . . . A man is right and invincible, virtuous and on the road towards sure conquest, precisely while he joins himself to the great deep Law of the World, in spite of all superficial laws, temporary appearances, profit-and-loss calculations; . . . and surely his first chance of co-operating with it, or getting into the course of it, is to know with his whole soul that it *is*; that it is good, and alone good! This is the soul of Islam; it is properly the soul of Christianity;—for Islam is definable as a confused form of Christianity. . . . Islam means in its way Denial of Self, Annihilation of Self. This is yet the highest Wisdom that Heaven has revealed to our Earth."[1]

It is a far cry from the south-west corner of the continent of Asia to the north-eastern region, across an interval of thirteen hundred years. The comfortable-looking old Mullah is seated in his apartment at the Mohammedan mosque in Fakumen on April 7, 1924, the first day of the fast of *Ramadan* (*Ramazan*, he calls it). Among the group of men pleasantly chatting in the room, I am the only person drinking the hospitable tea; for, as the Mullah, pointing to his mouth, expressively puts it, not a grain of food may pass their lips all day.

Some weeks previously we had had a special evangelistic service in our church, to which local leaders were invited; the chief magistrate was in the chair. Among the speakers was our friend the Mullah. Not a trace

[1] Carlyle, *On Heroes*, pp. 51–53.

of embarrassment appeared in his manner when he informed us that he could not read Chinese, his studies being in Arabic ; his address that day was based on a story from the Koran. By way of paying a return visit to this good-natured easy-going gentleman, I had happened to call on the first day of the annual fast, bringing him some little books prepared for people of his faith. On the cover of one booklet he read the Arabic characters, but to my astonishment turned to me to find out what was the Chinese printed underneath ! And the Mullah is not a foreigner, except in religion, and doubtless in ancestry. It is as if an Irish priest contented himself with the study of his Vulgate Testament, without ever learning to read or write the English language. Throughout China schools are attached to most of the mosques. Where Moslems are comparatively few, these schools are for those in training for the priesthood. In Fakumen the course of study lasts ten years, and as many as ten Arabic commentaries are read before the Koran itself. To attain proficiency in Arabic, they say ten years are required.

That April morning we talked of many things. Two younger men, the one an assistant whom they designate " Imaum," and the other a former pupil back from Peking, where he is pursuing his theological education, were better informed than the old Mullah. But whether priests or laymen, all seemed agreed in following the stereotyped paths. No taint of modernism sullied their allegiance to ecclesiastical law. And what is the law of Mohammed in China ? In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord instructs His Jewish followers how to observe in secret three of the main practices of their religion—almsgiving, prayer and fasting. Add to these the first and great commandment, along with the yearly visit from all quarters to

Jerusalem at the Passover, and you have the Jewish equivalents of the five chief duties of an orthodox Moslem. There are, of course, specific differences in each case, the most vital being in the first commandment.

Of these Pillars of the Faith the first is : (1) Recognition or Confession of the *Kalima*, which is fundamental : "There is no God but God, Mohammed is the ambassador of God." Printed in Arabic and Chinese, the *Kalima* is widely circulated and well known among the Moslems.

(2) The second Pillar concerns the rites of Prayer, including Purification. Five times a day at stated periods should prayer be offered. Before each occasion the necessary preparation is washing, either the minor ablution of the head, hands and feet, or the major ablution of the whole body. Like all mosques of importance, the Fakumen mosque has a bathing house in which small stalls are fixed. The Chinese are not partial to cold water either for outward or inward application. Hence, in the severe winter especially, there is plenty of steam in these ecclesiastical baths. The stated times of prayer are observed by few, with the exception of the priests, and then only in the mosques or privately. The sight so familiar in other lands, of the Moslem kneeling in public, is never seen in China. Friday is their day for united public worship. The large plain mosque with the prayer-niche in the western wall, the worshippers facing towards Mecca, has a carpet on the floor. All the men—and only men are present—wear ceremonial caps of a conical shape, the priests being distinguished by white turbans. When beginning to pray to God, the thumbs are placed behind the ears and the fingers extended.[1] During the winter, out of perhaps four

[1] I have photographed the congregation in different kneeling attitudes of adoration. Some of the pictures appear in Broomhall, *Islam in China*.

hundred families only some thirty or forty persons might be present, the numbers increasing with the warmer weather. A simple sermon or exposition in Chinese is fairly common at the Friday service, but the liturgical portion is in Arabic.

(3) The Fast of *Ramadan*, the third duty, is observed by women in their homes more than by men. During the whole month strict Moslems neither eat nor drink until after sundown, when a white thread can no longer be distinguished from a black one. There are meetings each evening in the mosque with lighted lamps. The last day of the month is a great day of rejoicing when the long fast is over and the congregation gathers in unusually large numbers to offer praise to God. On that day in 1924 the mosque was not large enough to hold the throng of men worshippers who overflowed outside the doors. Once during the fast I met on the street an elderly neighbour who is a well-known Mohammedan medical man. We stopped and had a long chat. "Alas!" sighed Mr. Yang, "I am a sinner. No, I am not keeping the fast. Indeed, in our household the only one who is keeping it is my old companion.[1] But on the day the fast is over I shall go to the meeting at the mosque and confess my sin to God. The rules of our faith are too irksome for me. Even the ceremonial washings I don't pay much attention to." In reply to a query of mine about circumcision, Mr. Yang sighed once more. "It is quite a hygienic custom," he remarked. "But how troublesome is the operation for a child! Neither my son nor my grandson has been circumcised." Evidently our neighbour is not distinguished for zeal in carrying out the requirements of his religion. One might judge that in his heart he has a hankering to join the ranks of the Christians. With entire appro-

[1] "Old companion" = wife.

bation he quoted to me the saying of Christ: "Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man."[1] This was quite unexpected, for however lax a Mohammedan may be in other matters connected with his creed, he is likely to be strict in his aversion to "black flesh," that is, pork. Illustrating the force of this taboo, an incident which happened during the Russo-Japanese War may be mentioned. A detachment of Russian soldiers passing through Fakumen was billeted in the Mohammedan quarter. The Russians prepared their food in the ordinary large fixed pots belonging to the homes. After the soldiers left, the Mohammedans, no matter how poor they were, smashed their own utensils rather than incur defilement through the pork that had been cooked in the pots.

With regard to the liberal-minded medical man, it may be added that some years ago he stepped in to prevent his brother receiving Christian burial. The brother was an earnest cultivated Mohammedan who became a Christian, the only member of that community in my experience to change his religion and join our Fakumen Church. Subsequently he became a school teacher with us, respected and liked by all who knew him. His breach with the tolerant Moslems brought no persecution in its train. But when he died, immediately the relatives, headed by his brother, insisted on his being buried according to the Mohammedan rites, which are distinctive and peculiar. And we Christians could not persuade them to desist.

(4) "When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee."[2] In a Chinese Mohammedan proclamation it is stated that "to pay *Zakat* is the first duty that Heaven requires."[3] Abdul Aziz said: "Prayer carries us half-way to God, fasting brings us

[1] Matt. xv. 11. [2] Matt. vi. 2.
[3] Broomhall, *Islam in China*, p. 250.

to the door of His palace, and alms procures us admission." [1] The proportion of income required for the payment of *Zakat* or alms is 2½ per cent, or one-quarter of the amount customary among the Jews. But incomes under fourteen ounces of silver (now about £2 6s. 8d.) are exempt. Speaking of this matter with the Mullah and his companions, one noticed how loose was their interpretation of the rule. The Mullah emphatically declared that only where there were no debts was the duty incumbent on Moslems. Fancy a Chinese with no debts! The money contributed is used almost exclusively for helping their own poor; consequently Mohammedan beggars are seldom, if ever, seen. On the other hand the community in our part of Manchuria consists mostly of the poorer people. Just as their binding ceremonial laws turned the mediæval European Jews and the modern Jains of India to the banking profession, similarly the food taboos of the Moslems hinder them from joining the merchant class. The Chinese generally when they eat meat prefer juicy fresh pork to anything else; they do not much like to slaughter or eat oxen. The cattle trade is therefore in the hands of Moslems.

(5) The last of the five Pillars of the Faith is the *Hajj*, the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Despite the long distance, pilgrims go from all parts of China. "It is said there is a special part of Mecca where they congregate, and where they are looked after by Chinese who reside there." [2] Those entitled to the name of *Haji* are very proud of it, and frequently wear a distinctive badge.

Although the Chinese Mohammedans are, broadly speaking, less strict and more tolerant than their

[1] Johnstone, *Muhammed and his Power*, p. 156.
[2] *North China Daily News*, December 25, 1923, art. by Mason on "The Moslems of China."

co-religionists in other countries, nevertheless they are not entirely cut off from the rest of the Moslem world. A few Turkish missionaries have come to stir them up. Sixteen years ago a highly educated Turkish graduate of Al Azhar University in Cairo established a large school in Peking for Arabic and Turkish. At the close of 1923 there were six Chinese students in the Al Azhar University. A magazine entitled *Moslems Awake* is published in Tokyo for circulation in China. Thus the sense of brotherhood among different races and peoples, so characteristic of the Mohammedan faith, is fostered by a variety of methods, and not least by the great annual pilgrimage to the holy city, towards which all devout Moslems, north, south, east and west, turn their faces when they pray.

Having now seen something of the present condition of Islam in China, let us consider the historical question—In what way did this Western faith gain its hold in the Far East? Of the first entry of Mohammedanism into China the traditions are uncertain. There is a very old mosque in Sianfu, the capital of the north-western province of Shensi. The city is famous as the starting-point of more than one religious movement that has influenced China; here the now extinct Jewish colony settled, Buddhism and Nestorianism flourished—the unique memorial tablet of Nestorian Christianity was erected here in A.D. 781—and Sianfu was in all probability the first city where the Crescent was planted in China. The ancient mosque there contains a Mohammedan tablet dated A.D. 742, thus claiming to be older than the Nestorian stone. Though there is good reason for doubting the historicity of this monument, which places the entry of Islam into China prior to A.D. 601—an impossible date, since Mohammed [1]

[1] Mohammed's dates are A.D 570–632.

only received his first revelation in 610—nevertheless the Chinese Moslems believe the inscription to be genuine.

The standard life of Mohammed in Chinese, called *The True Annals of the Arabian Prophet*, records that in A.D. 586 a strange star was seen in the Chinese sky, whereupon "the Emperor commanded the Chief Astronomer to divine its meaning, and he said that an extraordinary person had appeared in the West. The Emperor sent an envoy to investigate, and he arrived at Mecca after about a year's travelling. The envoy desired Mohammed to proceed to the East, but he declined; he sent, however, his maternal uncle, Saad Wakkas, and three others to accompany the envoy to China. The envoy secretly had a portrait of the Prophet made to take back with him; this was given to the Emperor, who proceeded to worship it. . . . When he arose, the scroll was there, but the image had vanished. Saad Wakkas said this was due to the influence of the Prophet, who had forbidden the worship of images. The Emperor was so impressed that he gave directions for the building of the 'Prophet-Remembrance' mosque at Canton." [1] Since the tomb of the Prophet's maternal uncle remains at Canton until to-day, it is to be regretted that Saad Wakkas never actually came to the Far East, but died and was buried in Arabia.

Amid the uncertainties of tradition two facts stand out clear. The first is that at various times, beginning in the eighth century, Mohammedan soldiers were sent by land into north-west China on the invitation of the emperors for their aid. And the other fact is that traders of that faith from early times entered Canton in the south. In neither case did the motive of entry into China correspond with the propagandist aims

[1] Mason, art. on "The Moslems of China."

farther west. Many Chinese have become Moslems otherwise than by birth, but there does not ever appear to have been much missionary enterprise. One notable instance of wholesale conversion is mentioned by Marco Polo. In the thirteenth century the powerful Emperor Kublai Khan, meaning to civilize the savage inhabitants of Yunnan, which is the province most distant from the capital, being contiguous to Burma, despatched a Mohammedan to administer the province. The governor's wise rule was such that the whole population became Moslems. It was in Yunnan that one of the two terrible Mohammedan rebellions of the nineteenth century occurred, lasting for eighteen years. When it was crushed by the Manchu Government in 1873, the victorious commander sent to Peking the rebel leader's head preserved in honey, along with twenty-four baskets containing ten thousand pairs of human ears. The second rebellion beginning a few years later than the first, took place in the north-west of the empire, where Moslems are more numerous than anywhere else in the country. Before the insurgents were finally overthrown in 1877, some ten millions of lives were lost. During the last century, therefore, it was only natural that the Moslem population should lie under the suspicion of the Government. As a consequence of this suspicion every mosque was obliged to display the emperor's tablet with the once-familiar words, "O Emperor, live for ever," or in the Chinese form, "Emperor, ten thousand years, ten thousand years, ten thousand times ten thousand years." This obnoxious article used to stand near the door inside the mosque, being either covered or removed during worship. Prior to the founding of the Republic such a tablet stood in the Fakumen mosque: it stands there no longer. For not only did the Republic pro-

claim religious freedom and toleration, but in the new flag with its five bars for the five races of China, red, yellow, blue, white and black, the white strip represents the Moslems.[1]

Among the forces binding together the Mohammedan communities in Asia, Africa and Europe, three may be touched on by way of conclusion to this brief treatment of Islam in China. The three forces are, the personality of the Founder, the Book he left behind, and above all, his doctrine of God. With more glaring faults than any other founder of a great religion, the Arabian camel-driver who rose through persecution to a dazzling height of fame undoubtedly won his way in part by his personal charm. One of his early disciples has penned an affectionate estimate of his master. When the equal of the Cæsars, he is said to have "visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of the lowliest, mended his own clothes, milked his goats, and waited upon himself. He never first withdrew his hand out of another's clasp and turned not before the other had turned. . . . Those who saw him were filled with reverence, those who came near him loved him." [2]

The Book left behind by the Prophet, who himself probably could neither read nor write, supplies the extreme example of the theory of plenary verbal inspiration, the uncreated word of God, delivered piecemeal in Arabic by Allah through the angel Gabriel to Mohammed. How this collection of one hundred and fourteen chapters of lofty devotion, passionate zeal for righteousness, confused legend, genuine history, endless iteration, trivial detail, and fierce denunciation, could ever have reached so high a pitch of sanctity, remains a puzzling problem to the

[1] The followers of Mohammed in China number five to ten millions.
[2] Ameer Ali, *Islam*, p. 53.

outside world. Except for Arabic-speaking people, the disadvantage of the Koran's sanctity is immensely increased by its language. No translation into Chinese, for example, is known to have been made.

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful": thus impressively begins every chapter but one of the Book which is meant to be "no other than a warning to all creatures." The essence of the Moslem idea of transcendent deity is unlimited power and arbitrary will. All that God wills comes to pass, and what He does not will does not come to pass. God's ways are not as our ways. He is not our Father, being far removed from us, His creatures not His children. The core of this theology is put thus by Gwatkin: "The first principle of Islam" is "that there is nothing human in God, nothing divine in man. . . . Man has no likeness to God. . . . A denial of the divine in reason overthrows religion entirely." [1] From such a view of God there follows what is perhaps the most serious defect of Koranic teaching—predestination, especially as applied to unbelievers. When asked, "Why did God create Armenian Christians?" a Turkish speaker immediately replied, "In order to fill up hell." This language is not what at first it might appear to be, merely an ebullition of the speaker's national spite. On the contrary it is the orthodox doctrine, according to which hell must be filled and hence God creates infidels.

It must be admitted that in many parts of the Moslem world the power of belief in God is by no means "soul-elevating." [2] Of the desert Arabs Conder says, "they are practically pagans." In the Indian Archipelago Mohammedanism leaves the heathen "his

[1] Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, vol. ii, pp. 121, 126.

[2] "The history of a Nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, so soon as it believes."—Carlyle, *On Heroes*, p. 70.

magic and sacrifices, his immorality and national sins. It only demands a mechanical observance of certain rites, washings, fastings, prayers towards Mecca, and a carefulness not to eat swine flesh." [1] On the other hand, we hear that every wandering Arab trader in Africa is a missionary, and we cannot help wondering why. Can it be that the answer is given in the prayer of one of the many mystics of Islam, whose joy was in communion with the Lover of their souls ? We used to be told that, according to Islam, women had no souls. It was the Sufi woman-saint, Rabia, who prayed : " O God, if I worship Thee in fear of hell, burn me in hell ; if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise ; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting beauty." [2]

When Europe was roused to war by Peter the Hermit, the Crusaders carried to the Moslems of Syria the message of the Cross at the lance's point. God forgive us ! We have taken away their Lord. There was no one to show the real Jesus to the Arabian Prophet, and very few like Raymond Lull to proclaim the Gospel to the Prophet's followers. Centuries of strife and inhumanity have so deepened their suspicion of the Western nations that now when Christ is at last truly lifted up, it is hard for the Moslems to see Him through the mist. And yet without a knowledge of the Son, how can they come to the Father ?

[1] Warneck, *The Living Forces of the Gospel*, p. 142.
[2] Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 115, quoted in Cave, *Some Living Religions of the East*, p. 238.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW THOUGHT TIDE

SOME RECENT RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

O stay of earth, who hast thy seat on earth,
Whoe'er thou art, ill-guessed and hard to know,
Zeus, whether Nature's law, or mind of man,
I pray to thee; for, on a noiseless path,
All mortal things by justice thou dost guide.

Glover, *The Trojan Women* (EURIPIDES).

CHAPTER X

THE NEW THOUGHT TIDE

SOME RECENT RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

One remarkable characteristic of the religious life of China is the number of lay communities or sects in different parts of the country, founded for a definite purpose. Among the aims of these scattered societies are mutual protection, national defence, the attainment of power over the spirit world, long life, or the warding off of disease, famine and flood. The ideal is usually embodied in a god and finds its spiritual strength in Buddhism, with its doctrine of compassion for all that lives, its impressive ritual, and its teaching about future blessedness. With regard to most of these sects one rule is strict vegetarianism.[1]

Prior to the time of the Republic the societies were of a secret nature, some being originally political in intention. As in other countries, the difficulty for the Government has been to distinguish in any popular combinations between the political and the religious aims. Chinese religious sects have often risen in arms against the state, the cause of disaffection being in all probability governmental oppression or misrule. The resulting persecution, especially during the reign of the Manchu Dynasty, has been very severe. "Many

[1] The sects may be looked upon as the precursors of Christianity; from among their ranks have come some of our finest Christians in Manchuria.

risings of sects, smothered in streams of blood, are clearly declared by imperial edicts to have been preceded by bloody persecutions under full imperial approval." Such is the judgment of Dr. De Groot, who, speaking of a religious war, which devastated five provinces at the beginning of the nineteenth century, utters this weighty pronouncement: "We certainly do not exaggerate when we say that there is in the history of the world no second instance of such wholesale destruction of people by their rulers for the sake of politico-religious fanaticism. It has made the altar of Confucius, on which the Chinese people is frequently immolated, the bloodiest ever built." [1]

Of recent years a variety of new sects have sprung up, of which a notable one, the "Open Court," has already been described. A few more may be touched upon here. In 1915 there was published a book which had a wide circulation in China, called *Put an End to War*. The author was a boy ten years old, an infant prodigy, or "Divine Child" (as his designation may be translated), living in Tsinanfu, the capital of Shantung. This boy, who had already been expounding the principal Confucian Classics, set himself to show by means of the teaching of the Five Great Religions that war was wrong. Through the movement begun by this prodigy and his father the "Universal Society for Virtue" was founded in 1920. From Tsinanfu the society has since spread throughout the country, each branch being a law unto itself. The members are mostly drawn from the merchant and peasant classes, in which respect it differs from the more aristocratic and scholarly "Open Court."

One of the main purposes of the society seems to be the wide distribution of religious and ethical books,

[1] De Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, p. 217.

dealing with well-known faiths. The five religions, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, are recognized in this order, placing first the two faiths indigenous to China. The regulations for the halls or courts of the society's buildings state that one court is to be reserved for the worship of the founder of each of these religions and for the display of its sacred books and other appropriate literature. The central court belongs to the "One Lord of Spirits, Creator of Heaven and Earth." Jesus is referred to in the same terms as Mohammed as the "Introducer" to God.

In May 1923 I visited their headquarters, a rather unimpressive place; above the central altar, in an untidy room, there simply hung a picture of Confucius. At this shrine had been placed as an offering the copy of the New Testament which I had given in return for the present to me of their *Commentary on the Four Confucian Books.* Outside the door of the reception-room a notice was posted explaining the future plan of action for the "Divine Child." After three years or so he was to go abroad to make known the doctrines of the society to foreign countries. But alas for the prospects of this foreign tour, the prodigy has lost his abnormal qualities and has been studying in a Christian high school, the Peking Academy! Nay more, he has enrolled his name as a catechumen in the Methodist Church. It is more than doubtful if he would approve of the spirit-photograph of Jesus, which was shown to me at the headquarters of the "Universal Society for Virtue."

Another body with a high-sounding title stepped into the limelight in the autumn of 1923, through its appalling prophecy of woe. The "Universal Association for the Unity of Religion" originated in the province of Szechuan in the far west, through a strange

individual who had come into contact with Christianity. Thousands of leaflets were scattered over the country, giving particulars of terrible calamities which were to take place at the Autumn Festival of the Eighth Moon that year (September 25th). For five days and nights the world would be without the light of sun or moon. Earthquakes, tidal waves and tempests would destroy one-third of the population. Therefore the prophet in mercy to mankind proclaimed a way of escape, including careful instructions about laying in a store of food, preparing warm clothing, and moving out of high brick houses. "When you hear a loud report you must not recklessly make investigations, lest you be punished by the angels and armies of heaven, and thus be in sore distress for your life." Before the awful day arrived, many had removed from their homes in Peking to temporary booths outside the walls. The peasants of Shansi Province were so scared that they refrained from the sowing of the winter wheat at the proper season. The day of the Eighth Moon Festival dawned in North China bright and calm. There occurred no repetition of the earthquake which earlier in September had devastated the centre of Japan. Already the Government had closed down all branches of the association. The prophet was arrested, and then it was discovered that he and his associates had been making a considerable fortune by selling certificates of protection at the moderate rate of two shillings and sixpence per head. What an indication of the credulity of the masses! Such is the short history of an association which at the start was probably neither altogether fraudulent nor insincere.

Very different in its significance stands out the "Society for Cleansing the Heart," at present flourishing in Shansi, the model province of China. In this

province we have an example of patriarchal government of the best kind. For a time it seemed as if Sun Yat-sen in Canton would show the vast Republic how to establish honest and efficient rule in the territory under his immediate sway. Wrong-headed ambition and futile reliance on force well-nigh ruined the experiment of the Canton Free State. But in the north there is a governor who keeps out of the orbit of the rival warriors, pursuing the even tenor of his way in peace. One of the most notable of Governor Yen's acts has been the publication of a manual of citizenship under the title *What the People Ought to Know*. The first edition of two and three-quarter million copies of this handy compendium in easy colloquial, dealing with morality, the family, education, and economic reform, was distributed gratis throughout the province. An arresting section tells of the "Three Fears." According to Confucius, the superior man should fear the ordinances of Heaven, great men and the words of sages. Governor Yen instructs the people to fear God, the law, and public opinion. On the first of these the Governor says: "Consider the heavens and the earth, how mysterious they are; every possible wonder is in them. Were there no vital principle here, how could this great creation be? All you people worship a tablet of the true Ruler of heaven and earth, of the three boundaries, the ten places, and the ten thousand spirits. The words 'True Ruler' —what do they mean? They mean God. The words in the *Book of Poetry* which say, 'God is with you; have no doubts in your hearts,' mean that God is above men, and that no thought or deed of any man can be hid from the eyes of God. The Four Books and the Five Classics speak frequently of God. This was the truth that Confucius taught men." [1]

[1] *China Mission Year Book*, 1919, art. by H. K. Wright, p. 91.

"The Society for Cleansing the Heart," a semi-official organization for personal reform, has its headquarters in Taiyuanfu, the capital of the province, where more missionaries were martyred in the Boxer year than anywhere else. Branch associations are established in all the district cities and in many of the larger towns and villages; naturally, all officials are active supporters. The Governor has a lecture hall in his own yamen and has erected a larger hall for meetings open to the public. Attendance at the Sunday meetings is compulsory for representatives of the soldiers, students, and business men. Prominent Christians are sometimes invited to give lectures at these meetings. There is a hall for worship and meditation, called the "Self-Examination Hall." The method of cleansing the heart is very simple: anyone with sins to confess may do so by standing up at a public meeting in silence before God.

This enlightened effort to raise the moral standard of a population equalling the total of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, derives its stimulus from Confucianism, brought into line with the requirements of modern life. Nothing else quite like it exists in China. On the one hand, worship of the Sages takes place at stated times and the sacrifices to Confucius are regularly offered twice a year, while on the other hand the Confucian temple, kept in excellent repair, is "turned into a modern educational enterprise, with a library, a reading-room and an attractive educational exhibit." [1] Besides publishing a weekly magazine in the interest of social welfare, Governor Yen has gone a step farther than those philanthropic citizens of Belfast who pay for space on the street-hoardings in order to display passages of Scripture. The Chinese head of the province covers many of the walls in his capital with weighty exhortations to good conduct.

[1] *China Mission Year Book*, 1924, art. by G. Reid, p. 60.

There is at least one little rift in the lute. The Governor's emphasis on obedience to law, coupled with his leaning toward the cult of militarism, reminds one unpleasantly of the drill-sergeant attitude of the powers-that-be in Japan. It may be added that the real leader of the "Heart Cleansing Society," who is a member of the Governor's staff, once publicly declared that he believed Christianity to be the true religion.

The consideration of these three societies, each having some kind of constitution, however loose, may serve as a preliminary study to a much wider movement, which, like the Youth Movement in Germany, has no central organization whatever. Variously known as "The New Thought Tide," "The New Civilization Movement," and "The Chinese Renaissance," its purpose is "a critical examination of the cultural inheritance and institutions of the past," [1] with a view to reconstruction in every department of human activity. Quite the most striking feature of the movement relates to the general upheaval of the younger generation, intellectually and socially. A real inward change of front of conservative China has taken place within the period of a few years. How has it been done? To all immemorial customs, to every kind of orthodoxy in the state and the family, in education and religion, the simple question was propounded—*Why?* The answer of mere authority will in no department be accepted, the case being tried before the bar of reason.

While the movement has been a gradual growth, leading on the side of government to the abolition of the Manchu Empire, it was only after the Republic had been some years in operation that the Renaissance burst into flower. If a date can be assigned for the starting-point, the first issue of *La Jeunesse* (in Chinese,

[1] *China Mission Year Book*, 1923, p. 30.

New Youth) in 1915 may serve as well as any. This popular monthly was the rage for some time. But the marking of an epoch occurred in 1917. On the first day of that year war was declared, not on a foreign Power, but on the ancient classical language, which for two thousand years had reigned supreme in China. "'No dead language can produce a living literature,' was the war-cry of the literary revolution."[1] The fight to oust the Wenli or classical Confucian style in favour of the vulgar tongue, the plain Mandarin vernacular, lasted for three years. Fortunately the leading champion of democratic speech was a young man of extraordinary ability and personal charm, Professor Hu Suh of the National University of Peking, a graduate of Cornell and of Columbia. His thesis for the Ph.D. of Columbia University, *An Outline of Chinese Philosophy*, in its vernacular form, has been one of the best selling books of recent years. With his colleagues, Dr. Hu faced a hurricane of abuse. At the hands of the scholars of tradition the iconoclasts were deluged in rivers of vituperation. Cursed as traitors, reviled as imitators of the West, they never flinched until they had won the battle on behalf of the common people. The collapse of the classical tradition was heralded by the order of the Ministry of Education in 1920 that the vernacular, now the national language, should be taught in the first two grades of the primary schools. What Dante had done in the realm of language for Italy, Wycliffe for England, and Luther for Germany, was accomplished for the largest democracy in the world by a handful of reformers in Peking. During the first two years of the movement, more than three hundred magazines in the new colloquial were published, most of them, however,

[1] *China To-day Through Chinese Eyes*, art. by Dr. Hu Suh, p. 64.

being short-lived. Translations of Western literature kept pouring from the press.

At the Synod of the Manchurian Church in 1921 Dr. C. I. Cheng from Shanghai informed us that "what the missionary movement was unable to accomplish in one hundred years has now been gained in the struggle of the last four years." From the beginning the missionaries set themselves, not indeed to supplant the classical language, but to give the Bible to the people in their daily speech. The *literati* looked down on the attempt with lofty scorn. Our Mandarin Bible, with its "you, I and he," the mark of vulgar colloquial, had hitherto been a stumbling-block to the men of education. But since the vernacular has become the recognized language of the Press, the Government, and the schools, that stumbling-block, at any rate, no longer exists.

In order to understand the bearing of the Chinese Renaissance on religion, it is advisable to make a passing reference to the uprising of the students, who first made themselves effectively heard on political matters in May 1917. For the purpose of protesting against the notorious Twenty-one Demands of Japan, students' societies were formed in every province and a National Students' Union opened its headquarters in Shanghai. Two years later occurred an event probably without parallel in history. On May 4, 1919, fifteen thousand students paraded the streets of Peking, demanding the dismissal of two Cabinet Ministers and the Minister to Tokyo. These three "traitors," as they were called, were considered to be responsible for the loss of Tsingtao, formerly held by Germany, and at that time about to be assigned by the Versailles Treaty to Japan. The agitation spread; students' strikes broke out in one city after another. The students next appealed to the merchants of Shanghai,

who responded to a man. On June 5th all Shanghai was on strike. The Government then capitulated and accepted the resignations of the "traitors."

A spectacular victory of this kind, due to combined action on the part of the students of both sexes for a common object, was bound to have far-reaching effects. The successful employment of the strike-weapon led to a new and much more difficult situation between teachers and taught in the government colleges and schools. But swelled head was not the only result. The national consciousness, kindled to white heat among the students, found vent also in social service, aiming especially at the enlightenment of the illiterate and the instruction of poor children. Such patriotic and beneficent activities are apt to be spasmodic—"five minutes of hot heart," as the Chinese ironically express their own lack of persistence in public welfare schemes. A twofold legacy however has been left behind from those stirring days, a critical spirit and its manifestation on the printed page.

We come now to the question—What relation has the New Civilization Movement to religion? Whether themselves sympathetic or indifferent, the wiser leaders stand firmly for the principles of freedom of investigation and freedom of religious worship. But with the discussion of all sorts of modern philosophical and social theories, it was almost inevitable that in some quarters an attack should be made on religion. The most notable recent instance of such hostility occurred during the conference of the World's Student Christian Federation at Peking in the spring of 1922. Many young scholars along with some teachers then started an Anti-Christian Movement, the manifestos of which provoked the comment in the *Peking Express*: "How little the juvenile mind knows about the true principles of Christianity!"

Here are a few sentences from one of the manifestos: "We know that the human race is evolutionary, but Christianity teaches that it is stationary. We know that man is an intelligent being, but Christianity teaches him to obey the priest. It teaches the labourer to obey his employer and the wife to obey her husband. We know that life is interesting because of its continual struggles, but Christianity teaches men to resign themselves to fate. . . . Are not all members of the Y.M.C.A. and students of the missionary schools slaves of the Church?"

The Chinese newspapers in the ensuing controversy showed fairness and common sense. The Christian side got a hearing, and the extravagance of the anti-Christian statements was pointed out. But a much more serious instance of the secular attitude has to be recorded. The Association for the Advancement of Education is the most progressive and the most influential organization of the kind in the country. At its first annual conference in Tsinanfu in 1922 a resolution was passed, urging that in elementary schools no religion of any description should be taught, and especially urging teachers not to teach the children "such a belief as that there is a Supreme Being in the universe, a thing which has not been proved and cannot be proved." The resolution, which was widely circulated, carried great weight, because the association is under the direction of able thinkers and instructors, familiar with modern educational developments. A few years ago Sir Michael Sadler of Oxford gave it as his considered opinion that "the whole educational system of the world depends on the system adopted by China in the next two or three years." What then is that system likely to be? Keeping in view especially the future of religion in the government institutions, the tendencies of the present time will be clearer

to us if we note the choice of savants from abroad invited to deliver courses of lectures, chiefly in Peking.

One of the principal achievements of the Renaissance leaders was the securing of distinguished thinkers from different countries to come to the help of China. Already four have responded to the invitation in about as many years. The first, Professor John Dewey, one of the most notable of America's philosophers and educational experts, left an abiding impression. It is perhaps not too much to say that in large measure his advice settled the bent of future educational policy in China. Hitherto the tendency had been to follow the militaristic and authoritarian model of Japan, where the children are intended to be shaped to one pattern, to become good servants of the emperor. Under the influence of Professor Dewey, China shook off that strait-jacket in favour of the development of individual capacity and personality, characteristic of the systems of America and Britain. Schoolboys' military drill, for example, was discarded, and in the curriculum the pupil's self-expression was encouraged. A further impetus was given to this salutary change by the second lecturer, Professor Munro, of Teachers' College, New York, who followed the lines of his predecessor. The third expert, the Hon. Bertrand Russell, the Cambridge logician and socialist, went still further in the encouragement of freedom. His success as a speaker may be judged from the fact that his addresses in Peking were taken down verbatim and issued in a special monthly, of which six thousand copies were first printed and further editions demanded. From end to end of the country the newspapers reported his opinions. What those opinions are may in part be learned from his volume, *The Problem of China*, published in 1922, after his return to England. " Education controlled by missionaries or conservative white

men," says Mr. Russell, "cannot give what Young China needs. After throwing off the native superstitions of centuries, it would be a dismal fiasco to take on the European superstitions which have been discarded here by all progressive people. It is only where progressive Chinese themselves are in control that there is scope for the renaissance spirit of the younger students, and for that free spirit of sceptical inquiry by which they are seeking to build a new civilization as splendid as their old civilization in its best days." . . . "One may say broadly," he continues, "that the old traditional education, with the military governors and the British and Japanese influence, stands for Conservatism; America and its commerce and its educational institutions stand for Liberalism; while the native modern education, practically though not theoretically, stands for Socialism. Incidentally, it alone stands for intellectual freedom." [1]

"The Chinese are a great nation, incapable of permanent suppression by foreigners." affirms the English philosopher. "They will not consent to adopt our vices in order to acquire military strength; but they are willing to adopt our virtues in order to advance in wisdom. I think they are the only people in the world who quite genuinely believe that wisdom is more precious than rubies. That is why the West regards them as uncivilized." [2]

With this piquant dictum in our minds we pass on to notice the fourth visiting lecturer, who came in 1923, Dr. Hans Driesch of Leipzig University, famous both as a man of science and a philosopher. In 1907 he had been Gifford Lecturer in Aberdeen, his theme then being an elaborate proof of vitalism, based largely on minute experiments made by himself in embryology. The learned biologist's conclusion is

[1] Russell, *The Problem of China*, pp. 224, 225. [2] *Ibid.*

that life is essentially free, spontaneous and creative, and cannot be accounted for on a mechanistic theory. In Peking, as might have been anticipated, the German scientist's careful reasoning did not meet with much acceptance ; the students attended his discourses only in small numbers. But the significant thing was the invitation of a Westerner who was favourable to religion.

The most recent of the foreign savants, visiting China in 1924, was a famous writer, different in type from any of the other four. The change was distinctly remarkable. Doubtless Rabindranath Tagore had attracted the Chinese leaders of learning owing to his being the first Asiatic to gain the Nobel Prize for Literature. Prior to his coming, several of his books were translated into Chinese, extracts being published by newspapers and magazines. These guests, be it remembered, occupy for the time a position of national importance, addressing an immensely larger constituency than any Gifford Lecturer. The man in the street therefore, if he could read, would have been able to learn of Tagore's belief that " God is Love." During his brief stay he appealed to packed crowds of students and others to stand for an ideal of the spirit, against the material civilization flooding Asia from the West. His beautiful thoughts and stately appearance left a deep impress on those willing to receive his poetic message.

On the whole we may sum up the relation of the New Thought Movement to Christianity by saying that now our religion has a better chance of a hearing than before. The barrier of contemptuous indifference has fallen away. Not only so, but on the practical side the Renaissance has come to reinforce the Christian campaign against ignorance and superstition. The meaning of social service is now more generally under-

stood. Professor Hu Suh himself, though not a Christian, says that when he wants to do social work he goes for help to the Christians. The Renaissance, in short, seeks to recast society on the basis of unfettered development of human personality. "There is no limit," say the New Thought leaders, "to the upward reach of personal character." "Ye therefore shall be perfect," said Jesus, "as your heavenly Father is perfect." [1]

The continent of Asia is the cradle both of the human race and of the higher religions. Those religions, as we have seen, are in one way or another showing signs of renewed life. From Russia, which is partly akin to Asia, came the greatest writer of the nineteenth century, whose spiritual influence has encircled the globe. The teaching of the Russian prophet made a permanent impression on the man who, whether in prison or out of it, stands in the forefront of Asia to-day. It is fitting that our studies of the Eastern faiths at grips with our own should close in the company of the leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi. He, more than anyone else, is a symbol of the religious awakening that has come upon the nations of the East. As has, I trust, in some measure been shown, religion is not mainly a matter of doctrines, but of persons. Gandhi said of himself in South Africa: "It is my misfortune that I am a religious man in the guise of a politician." With the burning topic of his political activities we are here only incidentally concerned. It is, however, necessary to mention the main facts of his remarkable career.

His family belonged to the Vaishnavite sect of Hinduism, leaning to Jainism with its doctrine of non-destruction of life. In early manhood he read for the first time the Sermon on the Mount, which filled

[1] Matt. v. 48.

his heart with joy. Then Tolstoy's book, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, stamped on his mind the truth of non-resistance, and revealed to him the contradiction between Christianity and all existing forms of government. As a barrister, trained for three years in England, he went to South Africa in 1893, becoming the acknowledged leader of the large Indian population of Natal and Transvaal. By his courage, moderation, and power of eliciting self-sacrifice he won for his countrymen the repeal of unjust laws, using passive resistance, not riotous disturbance, as his only weapon. After twenty years in Africa he returned to India and established an institution, half-monastery, half-school, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. Here his pupils were trained to observe the vows of truth, fearlessness, non-violence, celibacy, and non-possession. In 1919 took place Gandhi's first national campaign of organized passive resistance to the Government of India, which to his bitter sorrow led to violence, and was therefore dropped. The next year saw the starting of the more ambitious movement, by progressive non-violent non-co-operation, to compel the Government to grant *Swaraj*, or Home Rule. Then followed the arrest of the leader, his trial and sentence of six years' imprisonment—a sentence which he thankfully accepted. Owing to ill-health he was released early in 1924, after having served about a third of his term. The skill and devotion of the English doctor who performed an operation on him for acute appendicitis just in time to save his life, along with the wise action of the Government in granting his release, caused an outburst of joy and gratitude throughout the land. Politically his campaign has been largely a failure. The Government was not brought to its knees. As a peaceful mass movement the failure was tragic, and yet before his trial some twenty-five thousand of his

followers had willingly gone to jail, refusing to plead. And in the extremity of his physical weakness the Mahatma ruled India from the hospital as no viceroy has ever been able to do.

Looking behind his propaganda, let us peer into the spirit of the Mahatma, the Great Soul, the Saint, as all India reverently calls him. In November 1921, at the time of the Bombay riots following the arrival of the Prince of Wales, Gandhi wrote to the Press: "It is not possible to describe the agony I have suffered during the past two days. I am writing this now at 3.30 a.m. in perfect peace. After two hours' prayer and meditation I have found it. I must refuse to eat or drink anything but water till the Hindus and Mohammedans of Bombay have made peace with the Parsis, Christians and Jews, and till non-co-operators have made peace with the co-operators. The *swaraj* that I have witnessed in the last two days has stunk in my nostrils. . . . The non-violence of the non-co-operators has been more than the violence of the co-operators, for with non-violence on our lips we have terrorized those who have differed from us, and in so doing we have denied our God. I am more instrumental than any other in bringing into being the spirit of revolt. I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining that spirit. I must now do penance for it." [1]

The novelty of such a method of handling a political situation is quite startling. Can anything worth while, we ask, be accomplished by it, except within the hearts of those who fast and pray? That question brings us to the core of Gandhi's message and of his power. It behoves every reader of the Gospels to ponder the message in the light of the central fact of history. Listen to Gandhi's definition of his paramount principle

[1] Quoted in *Asia*, August 1922, art. by G. Emerson.

of action: "*Satyagraha* is holding on to Truth, and means Truth-force. It excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth, and therefore not competent to punish. It is not conceived as a weapon of the weak. *Satyagraha* includes all non-violent resistance for the vindication of Truth." In other words, "he who would vindicate truth against opposition . . . must be prepared to endure unlimited suffering at the hands of those who wish to bend him to their will, without resort to retaliation. Self-suffering thus accepted will melt the hardest heart and bring to an end the bitterest tyranny. . . . Self-suffering is the test and measure of the truth." [1]

Here then we have the hero-saint of India, the most significant personality on the continent of Asia, frail in body, devoid of material resources, spurning the weapons of the mighty, daring to urge three hundred millions of the poor and the meek of the earth to put their trust, not in the arm of the flesh, but in the unlimited divine forces of the soul. We are here witnessing the birth of a spirit of revolution loftier than that of the French Revolution of 1789, or the Russian of 1917. From the standpoint of politics it is almost bound, in the future as in the past, to be defeated. Yet how much more potent is such a defeat than all the victories of Napoleon Buonaparte! What is the meaning of failure in a campaign waged as Gandhi's paper, *Young India*, directed, in the issue following his trial? "The God of Truth and Love . . . never allows any of His creatures to be outside His pale; and if so, we can never have anybody who is our enemy. . . . We are all united in God's eternal embrace, and this religious war of ours will go for

[1] *United Free Church of Scotland Record*, June 1922, art. by Principal Gardiner, p. 203.

nothing if it does not bring out into clear prominence this rock-bottom factor of our life."

Amid the distressing turmoil of party strife, a prophetic appeal of that kind would be sufficiently wonderful even in a country like England, where Christianity is the generally accepted faith. It is still more wonderful, coming from India. Nor is this all. The President of the All-India Christian Conference has spoken of the Mahatma as the greatest living Indian Christian, because of his devoted life of love and service. Both directly and indirectly, Gandhi has focussed the attention of multitudes upon the character of Jesus. He has urged his followers to study the Gospels as he himself does. The face of India has been turned to the Cross, because when compelled to find some example to help them to understand the life of their leader, it is to Christ, and not to the figures of Hinduism, that the Mahatma's followers have gone.[1] "I believe in God," wrote Gandhi to a friend, "as I believe that I am writing this letter."

[1] See *The Student Movement*, December 1922, art. by W. Paton.

CHAPTER XI

FROM DEPENDENCE TO LEADERSHIP

CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

When I try to bow to thee, my obeisance cannot reach down to the depth where thy feet rest among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

My heart can never find its way to where thou keepest company with the companionless among the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost.

TAGORE, *Gitanjali.*

CHAPTER XI

FROM DEPENDENCE TO LEADERSHIP

CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

In Asia, the continent of its birth, Christianity has never been the established faith of any powerful state, occupying instead the position of a dissenting or alien creed. One branch, indeed, of the Church there has had a remarkable, if somewhat obscure, history of missionary zeal, ending in almost complete failure. At the time of Christ more Jews probably lived in the Parthian Empire than anywhere else. After Pentecost these Jews largely became Christians, forming the Church east of the Euphrates. Enjoying a peace and liberty unknown under the torment of Rome, the Church became very prosperous. The name "Nestorians" is not a correct description of them, because Nestorius never visited them, nor did he speak their language, and besides, their Church was powerful before Nestorius was born. To-day the remnants of the once great Assyrian Church are found among the Christians of St. Thomas in India and the Nestorians of the mountain fastnesses of Kurdistan. They were in truth the Protestants of Asia, abhorring images, the confessional and the doctrine of purgatory, and worshipping God in simplicity with an open Bible. Their creed, formulated in 612, is identical with the Nicene Creed, omitting the *filioque* clause.

It was this creed, and not, as is sometimes assumed, an emasculated heresy, which made its appearance in 635, under the name of the "Luminous Religion," at the Court of China, when one of the most brilliant dynasties was in power. At once the emperor received the missionaries with favour, issuing a decree in praise of the new faith and permitting a monastery to be built in the capital. For a hundred years the mission flourished, and then, strange to say, disappeared. So complete was its eclipse, that it was only through the accidental discovery of a large stone tablet in 1625 by workmen digging foundations in the Shensi Province that the world became aware of this buried chapter of zeal for the evangel of Christ. The Nestorian Tablet,[1] being in excellent condition and carved in an exquisite style of calligraphy, is greatly admired by the *literati*, and is indeed one of the treasures of China. The inscription speaks of the Triune God, of the Fall, of the Incarnation, Life and Ascension of the Saviour Messiah. Though the symbol of the Cross stands at the head of the monument, there is no mention of Messiah's death. The stone, however, was not intended as a catechism, nor has it any trace of the old Nestorian heresy.

Six centuries after the first attempt, Assyrian Christianity reappeared in Cathay, this time making a deeper impression, though not in a missionary form. The influx of the strangers coincided with the Mongol conquests. The mother of the famous Kublai Khan, the first Mongol Emperor, was a Christian princess. Marco Polo, who reached the court of Kublai Khan in 1274, often refers to the Nestorian Christians. They were, he says, liked by the emperor, because they did not tell lies. The Venetian traveller further informs us that the emperor was sometimes minded to embrace

[1] See p. 198.

the Christian faith, and that he once remarked: "If your Pope will send some priests who can work miracles, I and my people will receive baptism!" The Mongol rulers preferred to give official posts to foreigners; hence many Christians from central and western Asia settled down in the imperial service, forming their own communities. After an ascendancy of one hundred years the Mongol power was driven out, and no favour was subsequently shown to the Nestorians, who had by this time departed greatly from their original faith. The last of the "Worshippers of the Cross" were heard of early in the seventeenth century, living in fear of their lives.

It is quite possible that both the Pure Land school of Buddhism and the Pill of Immortality sect—a sect which claims ten or eleven million followers—may have been influenced by Nestorian doctrines. Even so, the melancholy failure of this earliest missionary enterprise in the largest and most ancient Asiatic nation is a salutary reminder that God does not, apart from man, work miracles to keep Christianity alive. Why the effort was unsuccessful is a matter for conjecture. In the opinion of Lord William Cecil, "apparently the mistake made by the Nestorian preachers was that of being ashamed of their faith and trying to recommend it as a branch of Buddhism." Or, again, it may be that they did not train their converts to stand alone without the foreign teachers. Whatever may be the explanation, the fact remains that from the first, Mohammedanism, although an alien plant, rooted itself in Chinese soil, while Christianity withered and died out. "When the Son of Man cometh," asked our Lord, "shall He find faith on the earth?"[1] To that solemn searching query there is only one reply: "It depends upon you and me."

[1] Luke xviii. 8.

For missionary zeal in the Roman Catholic Church the members of the Society of Jesus, the most powerful and the best educated community in that Church, have been pre-eminent. The most famous missionary of the Society was one of its founders, that tireless young French nobleman, Francisco Xavier, who baptized ten thousand Hindus in a month, enduring the severest privations on his long journeys in East Asia, and dying at the age of forty-six on an island off Canton, before he could realize his ambition to enter the mainland of China. It was a Jesuit, Father Ricci, who in 1580 began the first permanent Christian effort to win China. And a memorable beginning was then made, for the learned Italian became a master of the Chinese language, translating, for example, Euclid into Chinese. His mathematical and astronomical knowledge brought him into favour at the Peking Court and prepared the way for his religious teaching. Many converts were made and churches arose in the capital city itself. It was the Society of Jesus which more than fifty years ago founded the Sicawei Observatory near Shanghai; this at the present time is one of the best known centres of applied science in the East. For the daily bulletins announcing the whereabouts of deadly typhoons and other valuable meteorological information, every mariner on the China coast is indebted to the labours of the Jesuit Fathers.

With regard to the work of the Roman Church in China as a whole, the number of Chinese baptized members, according to the latest available figures, is 2,244,366, while the Protestant total is 536,217. The ratio of membership is thus about four to one. On the other hand the number of their foreign missionaries is smaller than ours. The Protestant missionaries of both sexes number 7,663, of whom 2,768 are

men : the Roman Catholic missionaries number 6,328, including 3,060 priests and lay brothers. In connection with this last figure, the total of residential centres should be noted, viz. 1,350, while the Protestant centres are considerably fewer, being 1,038. It may thence be inferred that the foreign Catholic priests are very widely distributed over the vast Republic.[1]

There is one other feature of Catholic propaganda which specially deserves mention. The stress of war-time did not prevent, but rather seemed to stimulate, the formation in 1918 of the Maynooth Mission to China. Of the three hundred students applying for admission to the college opened in Galway for the training of missionaries, only with difficulty could room be found for forty-two. The first band of sixteen priests arrived in China in 1920. During the following year eleven more priests and four Christian Brothers left Ireland to join the staff on the field. Of the Brothers one resigned the principalship of a large National School in Belfast in order to go abroad. It is a great encouragement to us to consider the earnestness of these young fellow-countrymen of ours, leaving home at the call of God, with no prospect of coming back, receiving barely a living wage, and devoting their all to the winning of five million Chinese souls for the Roman Catholic Church. I trust you will join with me in looking over the fence and heartily wishing them God-speed.

The history of modern Protestant missions begins with William Carey, who landed at Calcutta in 1793. Fourteen years later, in 1807, Robert Morrison, the

[1] In this paragraph the Protestant statistics, with one exception, are taken from the *World Missionary Atlas*, published in 1925 : the exception is the number of " residence stations," there given as 740, though the larger figure occurs in *The Christian Occupation of China*, published in 1922. Most of the Roman Catholic statistics were prepared for the Vatican Exhibition of 1925 and printed in the *Revue d'Histoire des Missions* for June 1925.

first Protestant missionary to China, reached Canton. Why is it that most of the great missionary and Bible societies of Britain were founded shortly before or shortly after the beginning of the nineteenth century? Undoubtedly we are here in presence of a complex movement of the human spirit, which on the political side produced the French Revolution, on the scientific and practical side saw the outburst of mechanical invention leading to the Industrial Revolution, and in the religious sphere resulted in the widespread revival under John Wesley. The wealth brought by machinery to an England aroused out of its religious indifference found many an outlet in evangelical enterprises beyond the seas. Still more important, however, than the background of a complex movement, although intimately related to it, are the leaders, the men of genius, whose work becomes the heritage of the whole race. Among the array of famous writers, scientists and politicians of the period in question, if character and achievement be the test of greatness, the first two Protestant missionaries to Asia take a high place. Both Carey and Morrison were men of extraordinary gifts. From being manual labourers, the former a shoemaker and the latter a maker of lasts, both became linguists of unique distinction. Carey translated the Bible[1] into Bengali; he spent forty-one years in India without going home. Morrison in 1824 printed the entire Scriptures in Chinese, of which he had translated more than half himself. The year before appeared his monumental Dictionary, an encyclopædia of learning, with forty thousand separate Chinese words, the result of sixteen years of toil. The records of these giants' accomplishments put many of us

[1] His translation of the New Testament "was *the first people's book* ever printed in Bengali, the fruit of seven and a half years of Carey's toil."—S. P. Carey, *William Carey*, p. 199.

puny folk of a later day to shame. In the matter of converts, Morrison's task was the more difficult of the two. Before a single baptism took place both had worked for seven years. But after twenty-five years the Chinese Christians in Morrison's circle only numbered ten, whereas the Serampore Mission gained three hundred in seventeen years. But the restrictions in China were severe. In order to escape observation, Morrison's early translation work had to be done in a cellar below the ground. It is related that his Chinese teacher was accustomed to carry hidden a small bottle of poison, so that if arrested by the authorities he might avoid horrible torture by committing suicide.

As you are aware, the closed door of China was blown open by foreign cannon, the missionaries pouring into the breach the armies of the West had made. Up till 1900 there may be said to have been four stages of Christian propaganda, each ending in a war. Prior to the Opium War, which issued in the opening of the first five Treaty Ports in 1842, the country was almost entirely barred against the religion of the red-haired, blue-eyed barbarians, unaccountably forcing their presence on the cultured sons of Han. After this preparatory stage there followed a sudden inrush of workers from most of the larger missionary societies of America and Britain. That the conditions of existence were terribly exacting is evident from the fact that the average missionary life was only seven years in duration. On the brave women, pent up in insanitary houses amid the filth and the heat of the southern cities, their best actions always liable to be misconstrued, the strain bore hardest of all. Repeatedly the messengers of the Cross were hounded out.

Then came the Arrow War and the capture of Peking by the British and French in 1860, the date of

the second opening of the Celestial Empire and of the sanction by the Treaty of Tientsin for the introduction of Christianity. Newchwang in Manchuria then became an Open Port. Yet even when the way began thus to be less blocked for the spread of the evangel, the country was in turmoil through the great Taiping Rebellion, which involved about two-thirds of the provinces, lasted for fifteen years, and caused the death of perhaps twenty million people. For a time it seemed possible that the rebellion might give a powerful stimulus to Christianity. The leader, who had read tracts given him by Morrison's first convert, formed a "Society of Worshippers of God," the aims of which were the abolition of idolatry, the stamping out of opium, and the overthrow of the Manchus. At the beginning religious worship was held in the rebel camp, the uprising being called by the ambitious title "The Heavenly Kingdom of Peace." The leader, however, who had never really understood Christianity, later on became a prey to megalomania, giving himself out to be the true lord of all under heaven, the second son of God and the younger brother of Jesus. In 1865 the Taipings were finally suppressed with the assistance of General Gordon's trained Chinese force, the Ever-Victorious Army.

Although from the date of the Treaty of Chefoo in 1876 foreigners were permitted to travel and reside in any part of the country, it was not until 1895, when the proud Empire had been thoroughly defeated by her little upstart neighbour and former pupil, Japan, that China at last really awoke. A change came over the face of the land. The Emperor Kwang Hsü sent for a Bible to the American Bible Society's Office in Peking; he ordered 129 volumes from the Christian Literature Society; he learned to pray. All these personal peculiarities might have been

tolerated, but when in 1898 he proceeded to carry his reforms into all departments of government, the Empress-Dowager stepped in, and by a *coup d'état* virtually deposed the rash young Emperor, confining him on an island in a lake. The upshot of the Empress-Dowager's reaction was the Boxer cataclysm of 1900.

Broadly speaking, the Chinese people are tolerant of variations in religion, especially when social conventions do not thereby receive too great a shock. Two national characteristics help to account for this commendable habit. Whether in the Indian or in the English form, the bane of caste is not found in China, where, alongside of patriarchal rule, democracy in society, though hardly yet in government, has been handed down a priceless gift from the long past. The other characteristic relates to the extraordinary willingness of all grades of the people to listen to moral exhortation. Against a speaker their prejudices may be strong, but in normal times politeness and restraint [1] somehow belong to the very fibre of the race.

The point to keep fixed in our minds with regard to the familiar story of the Boxer persecution is the fierce opposition to our religion, from no hatred of the faith itself, but only of its connection with the countries which on one pretext or another were stealing some of China's seaport towns. Europe learnt a salutary lesson: the thefts are not likely to be repeated. But the price paid by the Chinese Christians and the missionaries for the crimes of European Imperialism was severe. In the scramble for loot prior to 1900, although America stood honourably aside, her sons and daughters were not exempt from the general condemnation.

[1] Self-control is probably a more marked racial feature among the Chinese than among Western peoples. But if so, the breakdown of restraint under the stress of individual passion or mob fury is liable to lead in China to even greater excesses of unreason than in Europe or America.

Of the 232 foreign men, women and children, who then gained the martyr's crown, 188 were Protestants and 44 Catholics. In Manchuria 300 Chinese Christians met heroic deaths. Had it not been for the wisdom and friendliness of the viceroys and governors of the greater part of the country, the destruction would have been far more widespread. As it was, there were practically only two northern provinces, along with Manchuria, where the Boxer fanatics had a free hand.

With the inauguration of the Republic in 1912, religious toleration was proclaimed. A stiff contest subsequently arose in Parliament over the proposal to make Confucianism the recognized religion of the State. Led by the Christians, representatives of Buddhism and other faiths united successfully in defence of full and equal toleration, which thus in 1916 became embodied in the new constitution.

When the Church of China, arising from its ashes after the cataclysm of 1900, began to show signs of mature growth, one of the most pressing problems confronting it was the Church's relation to the Mission. In family life the transition of a child from the condition of pupilage to that of independence involves delicate consideration and adjustment on both sides. Exactly so is it in the mission field. Most parents naturally imagine they know what is best for their children's welfare. In politics this venerable theory goes by the name of Paternalism, or more familiarly, Toryism in its older form. Benevolent Imperialism finds its intellectual justification by means of that pleasant and comforting dream. Ecclesiastically, the paternal idea takes shape in the Prelacy our forefathers so cordially disliked. Whether the Church of Rome can advance far in the direction of internal democratic reform I cannot tell. If it can, America will doubtless afford the laboratory and materials for

the exciting experiment. But hitherto the strength and weakness of Catholicism as an organism for the cultivation of the religious life have been focussed at the central point—the spiritual father guiding his immature children.

At the other extreme in church government we have the Congregational or Independent system, which seems to have been in the main the original New Testament method. Corresponding to such a method in the handling of civic communities would be a more developed, or, as some would say, more chaotic, form of democracy than can be found to-day in any large nation. Congregational Independency, in fact, resembles Tolstoy's political ideal in putting the maximum of trust in the mass of the people and the minimum of faith in governmental authority.

Between the paternal theory of the Heaven-sent ruler or guide of the "multitude that knoweth not the law," and its antithesis in "philosophic anarchism," under the ecclesiastical form of which the Lord's people are assumed to be mature and spiritually minded, there stands the tough mixture or compromise, transmitted to us from an acute Frenchman through a courageous Scot. What is our Presbyterianism? A few years ago the young bloods of New College, Edinburgh, tried their hands at a definition. Perhaps it was while gazing from the gallery at the back view of the fathers and brethren met together in the Assembly Hall that they evolved this sparkling epigram: "Presbyterianism is the negation of youth erected into a system." A more favourable judgment was offered in lectures to theological students in Scotland by one of the ablest missionaries China has ever had. Speaking of the Eastern custom of local village government by head-men, whose authority is due rather to their age or ability or social standing

than to any formal appointment, Dr. Campbell Gibson, of the English Presbyterian Mission, said: "The Chinese have really been Presbyterians before they became Christians; or, to look at the matter from another point of view, the system of Presbytery, so far as it is sketched for us in the New Testament, is an adaptation, on the one hand, of the patriarchal arrangements of the Old Testament, and on the other of the organization of the guilds and friendly societies of the Roman Empire; and these in turn only represent universal principles of social order which grow up naturally among all primitive peoples."[1] Now Dr. Gibson's tempered eulogy involves no very lofty claim. Provided we are willing to lay aside the notion of ideal perfection or particular scriptural sanction for the system which we are called upon to administer, there will be real hope for the union of the Body of Christ. For one thing, we must be ready to relinquish the undemocratic features of Presbyterianism. How? By following, for example, the lead of the daughter Church in Manchuria. In 1923, for the first time, the Synod[2] of about a hundred and twenty members, which is our highest court, contained some forty congregational representatives other than pastors and elders, the foreign missionaries present forming about one-fifth of the whole. The new representatives, freely chosen by the congregations, might or might not be deacons; sex was not a bar. In consequence we found ourselves in a changed atmosphere, in which youth, instead of being negated, was very much to the fore. Doctors, teachers, Y.M.C.A. secretaries, with a number of young women,

[1] Gibson, *Mission Problems and Mission Methods in South China*, p. 198.

[2] The Synod of Manchuria arose out of the union of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission with the Irish Presbyterian Mission, which took place in 1890.

—such presbyters, not belonging to the eldership, prove either that the Church of Manchuria, founded by wise pioneers from Scotland and Ireland, is no longer Presbyterian, or else that the system we have inherited can be made more truly democratic and more practically useful.

The Presbyterians of China, owing their origin to no less than eight Churches—one in England, two in Scotland, one in Ireland, one in Canada, and three in U.S.A.—have for several years been united among themselves, and have already (in 1922) held a General Assembly, though distance and language stand in the way of much effective co-operation. It is worth noting that a union resolution states "that the Presbyterian Church of China, being autonomous, will have the prerogative of formulating its own standards."

Not only do the Presbyterians now form one body, but they are on the way to a wider organization, including the London Mission and the American Board, i.e. the Congregationalists of Britain and U.S.A. Moreover, just as the South India United Church has blazed the trail for India in the amalgamation of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, so it has been in South China that the greatest progress has been made. As a Chinese lady from Canton expressed it: "We have no denominations in Canton now; we are all simply Christians!" While that joyful exclamation was not quite literally true, it is a fact that eight Churches, three of them Presbyterian, have there joined into one. Indeed, the prospect of healing the wounds of our suffering Protestantism is far brighter in China than in the West. It may be added that when the great day of consummation comes, the Presbyterians will be one of the strongest branches of the Federated Church of China. In 1920 they had more missionaries than any other Protestant denomina-

tion, and also the largest number of communicant Christians—about a quarter of the Protestant total for the country.

The problem of watertight denominationalism looms on the horizon in Ireland, but is of greater urgency in the Far East. A quotation from an article by Dr. C. I. Cheng, Chairman of the National Christian Conference at Shanghai, 1922, puts the matter clearly. "While Christianity is an Oriental religion," says Dr. Cheng, "it has come to China by way of Europe and America. It did not come in its primitive simplicity, but with many accretions acquired during its spread in Western lands. There are no less than 140 autonomous missionary societies working in various parts of China at the present time. While in general the purpose of all these various bodies is one and the same, viz. the preaching of Christ to the people of this land who are still in spiritual darkness, yet each society or missionary organization has its own special interests, features, temperaments, and points of emphasis. This in itself is bewildering to the Chinese, both within and without the Church, especially when denominational differences are being emphasized to the extent that the members of one society or Church are incapable of working in unity and harmony with those of another. . . . Chinese Christians welcome union in every possible way, and are only held back from much closer union by the inability of their missionary friends to go with them." [1] Is it to be wondered at that the Chinese have little interest in our denominations? Indeed, how could it be otherwise? The only kind of Church that stirs them to their depths is a National Church, the name for which is "Chung-hua Chi-tu Chiao-hui," i.e. "The Christian Church of China."

Whilst the Church of China, Catholic and Protestant,

[1] *China To-day*, pp. 127–129.

a minute fraction—less than 1 per cent.—of the population, is not yet fully awake to its responsibility for completing the gigantic task which the foreign missionaries have begun, it has taken a long first step to that great end. Just as in any country the dawning of a consciousness of destiny, which we call nationality, changes its outlook and puts a new stamp upon its history, so also is it in the Christian Church. Within the last few years the Church of China has become conscious of itself, aware of its independent existence, like Mansel the metaphysician on the hearthrug when a boy making the momentous discovery, " This is I."

There was much to retard that discovery in our growing child of the faith. We missionaries cannot easily avoid being richer than most of our converts, and showing our wealth in the possession of houses, in which some of the rooms are actually lying idle. Besides, our numbers, though comparatively small, have considerably increased since the Boxer year. In fact, more than half the Protestant missionaries throughout China have arrived since 1911. Moreover, one out of every fifteen communicants is a salaried worker in the employ of the Church or the Mission. Hence it has happened that the infant Church, as Dr. Cheng wittily put it, " hangs on to the Mission like the tail of an elephant." And it was still true a few years ago that about two-thirds of the Church leadership in China was in the hands of the missionaries, as far as the administration of the sacraments and the admission of members were concerned, though in this respect Manchuria is in a very different situation, the leadership having in the large majority of the centres passed over from the foreigners to the Chinese.

The step, perhaps of necessity tardy, from a state of dependence to a position of dignity, independence and responsibility was definitely taken at the National

Christian Conference of 1922. Prior to that historic event, and preparing the way for it, there had occurred the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, where for the first time the world-mission of the Christian Church was faced with scientific thoroughness in an atmosphere of harmony. Three years later saw the visit to China of the Chairman of that Conference, a man unique in our generation, privileged to behold the vision and to lay the foundation stones of a House of God, no narrower than the inhabited earth. Calling Chinese and foreign representatives together in the proportion of one to two—at that time a new experiment, since similar gatherings had hitherto been confined to missionaries alone—Dr. Mott succeeded in fashioning a first-rate instrument with which to build, or rather to hew the materials for building, a unified Church of China. By means of this implement with the uninspiring title "Continuation Committee," there was produced in the fullness of time, nine years afterwards, the epoch-making Conference which gave the Chinese an equality of representation with the foreigners. It was noticeable that most of the Chinese who addressed the meetings were young, while most of the missionary speakers were not young. The principal achievement of 1922 was—to pursue the architectural simile—to frame a careful piece of scaffolding, this time with a better name, "The National Christian Council," the majority of whose hundred members are Chinese. That was on the side of building construction.

No less significant was the "Message of the Church," composed by a commission without one foreign member. The Message, which created a profound impression, was not meant to be a formal creed, but instead, a rousing prophetic call, first to the Christians of China to consecrate themselves in order to win their country for the Master, and then to non-Christians, urging them

to taste and see that God is good. Here are a few of the utterances from the Message which heralded the coming of age of the Church: "We appeal to all those who love the same Lord to follow His command and be united into one Church, catholic and indivisible, for the salvation of China." "We wish to voice the sentiment of our people that the wholesale, uncritical acceptance of the traditions, forms and organizations of the West and the slavish imitation of these are not conducive to the building of a permanent genuine Christian Church in China." "We of the Church confess our failure to stay the hands of the so-called Christian governments of the West in their unchristian exploitation of and aggression upon the sovereignty of China." "We call upon all Chinese Christian pastors and other teachers to Christianize the rapidly developing national consciousness, that we as a nation may be a witness to the whole world of the wonderful gift of the peace-loving nature with which God has endowed our race." "If we are to accomplish the creation of a new society, we must pass through many tribulations; but we believe that at the close of the day love will conquer evil, light will conquer darkness, and the Heavenly Kingdom of Christ will universally prevail."

The Spirit of God, who mightily sustained the faith and courage of the martyrs of 1900, has been at work, unremittingly, triumphantly, before our eyes ever since that time. Cleansed from within, strengthened by Western reinforcements, growing in generosity and evangelistic zeal, the young Church of the Republic faces now the hardest tasks of all. To the divided West she cries in piercing tones: "For the love of Christ, hinder not our scattered fragments from becoming one." With the teeming millions of her own vast land, she pleads: "Arise, leave your husks, and come home to Shang Ti, the God worshipped in ignor-

ance by our ancestors of old." For a Church so moulded by the Spirit of the Father can we refuse our best ? Can we hesitate to relinquish to such a Church the control of policy and purse, at the beginning committed to the pioneers from America and Europe ? Is the missionary justified in regarding himself in any other light than that of an assistant to his Chinese junior colleague in the ministry ?

Perhaps in reply to that last question someone may say : " It depends on the character rather than on the office of the junior colleague." And there lies the crux of all problems of this kind—ecclesiastical, political and social. The proper stage of development in a junior at which his senior in authority may devolve on him a power held in trust for Church or Commonwealth, will be judged in different ways according to our theoretical philosophy and our inherited temperament. Always, however, the Christian principle holds good, that the more we give, the more we shall receive, and the less faith we are disposed to place in others, the less trustworthy do they appear to us to be. In my own case the transition happens to have been singularly easy. And if you would like to know the reason why, I cannot do better than give you, in concluding this discussion of the daughter Church in the Far East, a brief sketch of the career of the Rev. C. W. Liu, the colleague to whom I have the privilege of being assistant minister in Fakumen. Born in 1891, he is twenty-one years my junior. In early life, owing to his mother's death, the boy lived with an aunt, who was a devoted Buddhist and a strict vegetarian. She taught him her religion, and the boy being of a serious turn of mind believed what he was taught. When seven years old he first saw his father, who was a carpenter and an earnest Christian. The father said to his child : " You have a dear Father in

heaven, dearer to you than I am." But the boy, cautioned by his Buddhist guardian against believing his father, clung to her opinion. At the age of thirteen Ching Wen (that is my friend's personal name) became a shop apprentice, which meant that he had to live on the premises, seldom being allowed out. A few years later the business failed, and the young apprentice, gladly leaving behind him the lies and deceit incidental to business life, went to his father's home. Now was the carpenter's chance to persuade his son to become a Christian. One evening, handing the Bible to the lad, his father said: "We are going to have family worship. You may read a portion of Scripture." Though inwardly opposed, he did not disobey. But when subsequently his father told him to come along to the chapel, he was afraid, not knowing what sort of folk the Christians were. After seeing the Christians a few times and finding them friendly, his prejudice wore away. And then at the period of emotional change from boyhood to youth, when conversions usually occur, Ching Wen turned of his own accord to the New Testament for deliverance. "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest," was the text which struck him most. Once his father said to him: "If you believe, you are my son, but if you do not believe, you are not my son." Before the Revival of 1908 he had already given his heart to the Lord, but that outpouring of the Spirit crowned his conversion with blessing and flooded his soul with joy. Hence at the age of seventeen one of its finest recruits joined the army of the Lord in Manchuria.

From the lowly post of cook in a chapel at the modest salary of some £4 a year, he rose step by step until at twenty-seven he finished his Theological College course, the youngest licentiate of his time. Ordained in 1920 to the ministry in Fakumen, he quickly made

his mark in the congregation and in the Synod for strength of personality and evangelical zeal. The following year was critical with him. When one or two older pastors had declined the temporary office of travelling secretary for the China for Christ Movement in our provinces, Liu Ching Wen was chosen. Feeling uncertain whether to accept so grave a responsibility, he surrendered his own will, committing himself wholly into the hands of God. The result was manifest wherever he went: his word was with power. Whether as a clerk of Synod, a delegate to the National Conference, a fearless advocate, when occasion arises, of reasonable Biblical theology, a preacher everywhere welcome, his wisdom and burning sincerity have won for this youthful leader a position of respect and affection, rich with promise for the future of the Church. Always striving to improve his intellectual equipment, he yet puts first things first, growing in grace as a humble and consecrated servant of his Master Christ.[1]

May we not apply a great Old Testament prophecy to the Church of China, not shrinking from its practical bearing on the situation of to-day? "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder." [2]

[1] At the Synod of the Manchurian Church held in July 1925 the Rev. C. W. Liu was chosen to be Moderator. As a result of the Shanghai police incident of May 30th, and of other causes, the whole country at that time was in a ferment. How did the Moderator handle the situation in the Synod? "He gave a splendid lead," wrote a correspondent, "and lifted us all up above race and wrong to where we could be 'all one in Christ Jesus.' Yet even he was *labouring* for a moderate spirit and tone, and urged the assembly to 'make distinctions between those who preached the Gospel and those who killed men.' He was wonderful all through."

[2] Isa. ix. 6. See *Report of National Christian Conference*, 1922, address by R. K. Evans.

CHAPTER XII

THE MESSAGE OF THE WEST TO THE EAST

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Naught be all else to me save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

A Prayer, from the Irish (MARY BYRNE).

When this discovery of the familiar, loving, human figure (of Jesus) is identified with the great declarations of the Creeds, then there will be inaugurated that revolution in our conception of God which is one of the greatest needs of our age.

ORCHARD, *The Finality of Christ*.

CHAPTER XII

THE MESSAGE OF THE WEST TO THE EAST

In order to estimate the value of any religion or of any life, there is one single comprehensive criterion available, and it is not a statement of creed. "By their fruits ye shall know them," [1] must be taken always and everywhere for our final test of character. Fixed into the framework of the universe, the law stands inviolable beside its companion, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." [2] Since, then, every one of us, Christian and pagan, sows tares along with the wheat, it is folly to assume that the wheat only, or the tares only, will spring up. If we are Christians, we do not shrink like cowards from the consequences of our evil deeds. We repent of the sins rather than of their results, and leaving all to our Father, find with infinite relief that in His forgiving love the curse of *karma* is transformed into a blessing: so have we been taught by our Lord. Outside of romances, no human being is devoid of traces of Him in whose image man has been made, and none is good save One, that is, God.[3]

From the beginning the aim of God has been the salvation of the world. Nothing less than this is compatible with the life and death of Christ. It follows that every kind of groping after the Divine signifies in some way God's answer to man's search. Discovery and revelation, whether in religion or in

[1] Matt. vii. 16. [2] Gal. vi. 7. [3] Mark x. 18.

science, are two sides of the same thing. Whatever of goodness, truth or beauty, man has discovered, must have been revealed by God. It is *His* meaning, therefore, that we ought chiefly to look for in the guesses and reflections by which men in all ages and in every stage of enlightenment have endeavoured to peer through the darkness hiding His face. When we regard the living faiths of Asia as sincere efforts to obtain spiritual deliverance, freedom and peace, we can perhaps put our finger on God's meaning in them, or a part of it. Looked at in this way, let us briefly note what sort of human needs these faiths have tried to meet.

(1) Dissatisfaction with the lower life urges us to fight against the lure of pleasure. If we could but get rid of inward cravings for forbidden things, then peace of mind might come. If we were able to quench the passion of desire, and gain detachment from the world and its deceptive snares, then salvation, purity, independence, rest of soul, would surely follow. Such we may suppose to have been the original essence of *Buddhism*. (2) The ethical discipline required from his followers by Sakyamuni was severe. Might not the same goal be attained in an easier way? Abandoning the pursuit of material gain and worldly honour, equally with the Buddha, *Laotzu* set himself to wait upon nature, striving to drown the voices of distraction within and without, by quiet contemplation, trust in the mysterious, ceaseless, noiseless Tao or Way of the living universe. (3) Neither of those two systems pressed vigorously on to the Absolute Source of all. Sakyamuni left that path unexplored. Laotzu went forward on it a long distance and stopped. It was the destiny of India to push out towards the very limit of the finite mind, even in her eagerness beating her wings against the bars of consciousness, searching for release from the burden of continued life by com-

plete absorption in the Absolute. Orthodox *Hinduism*, lower in the ethical scale than Gotama's reform, still clung to belief in the Infinite after Gotama had abandoned it, and in the end the spirit of religion conquered the Buddhist sceptical philosophy, albeit with grievous loss. Whether through the high gate of knowledge, said the Hindu saint, or by the lowly door of devotion, redemption in God we are constrained to find. (4) There comes a fourth stage in the search. The subjugation of imperious desires, the peace of nature in an empty heart, even the bliss of union with the Oversoul of all things—these three ways of deliverance may fail to appease the hunger of the soul. Turning away then from the dark chambers of the inner mind, we gaze upward, intent on listening for a Voice from beyond the canopy of the sky. "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down," we cry. And the Voice speaks into the ear of the chosen Prophet. The immanent, unsatisfying Absolute gives place to a King whose orders can be heard and obeyed. Far off indeed and unapproachable in majesty though He be, at the footstool of his Sovereign Lord the willing subject bows. He kneels in adoration, and the striving ceases, the restlessness is appeased. *Islam*, when we think of it as the end of rebellion through submission to the will of God, is a way that all of us must pass, if we are ever to reach the Promised Land. (5) Alone, however, no one can truly reach the goal. "Ferry yourself across the sea of sorrow," is the Buddhist doctrine. But the second step follows, "And ferry other men." Whether or not characteristic of Buddhism, social duty was certainly the aim of China's greatest Sage. The outlook of *Confucius*, unlike those of the seekers along various paths after God and inward freedom, was directed to the limited goal of an ordered society,

where reverence, friendship, and justice prevailed. God was treated with ceremonial respect, and life became a cultivated garden, where nature was trimmed into shape by art. It was the pattern of the whole that mattered; the claims of the individual were subordinated to the welfare of the state.

If further evidence were required to show that the higher faiths of Asia are partial revelations of Eternal Reality,[1] sincere efforts to meet the universal needs of the soul of man, we might call as witness a Chinese reformer of the fifth century B.C., whose teaching for a time rivalled in popularity that of his older contemporary, Confucius. Denounced by Mencius and having no imperial support, Mo-ti (or Micius) was ignored for two thousand years. But now the Professor of Philosophy in Peking National University writes of Mo-ti that "he was the only Chinese who can truly be said to have founded a religion."[2] Indeed, the reformer's affinities with Christianity are so arresting that one can readily see the point of a certain comment upon a missionary's address. "These are the doctrines of Mo," opined the Chinese critic, advising the preacher to read Mencius' refutation of the unorthodox radical. Mo-ti, rejecting the Confucian principle of a gradation of love decreasing with remoteness of relationship, propounded instead the idea of universal altruism. "If," says Mo-ti, "one regards other countries as his own country, treats other families as his own, treats other men as himself, then feudal lords will love one another and there will be no barbarous wars; the heads of families will love one another and there will be no usurpation of power; men will regard one another with

[1] In the seventh century B.C. Zoroaster, in Persia, "proclaimed that there was one God alone who was holy and almighty," and prayed that he might convert all men.

[2] Hu Suh, *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*, p. 57.

mutual love and there will be no robbery. The high will not abuse the low, the shrewd will not deceive the foolish. All calamity, oppression, hatred under heaven, will be prevented from arising." [1] The incentive towards such universal love is found in the example and the will of Heaven, who is a personal Divine Being, everywhere present, loving and protecting all and desiring all men to love one another. Mencius, despite his condemnation of this teaching, bore a remarkable testimony to the reformer himself: "Mo-ti loved all men, and would gladly wear out his whole being from head to heel for the benefit of mankind." Well might another of his opponents, the brilliant Chuangtzu, exclaim: "Mo-ti was certainly a glory to the world!" [2]

Glancing over the great faiths by way of a general summary, we might broadly cover the ground common to most of them with the statement of these four principles: (1) Recognition of a Supreme Being, (2) desire for salvation, (3) belief in retribution, and (4) belief in a future life.

That is the brighter side, which in our previous discussions has always been thrown into relief. It must not be forgotten that the ethnic faiths have also a darker side. The Professor of Sociology in the University of Wisconsin, Dr. E. A. Ross, brought his trained judgment to bear on the phenomena of Chinese life, and stated the results of his observation in an excellent volume, *The Changing Chinese*. "To the ranging eye," he says, "the fruits brought forth by the religions of China appear to be numberless temples, dingy and neglected; countless dusty idols portraying hideous deities in violent attitudes expressive of the worst passions; an army of ignorant priests, as

[1] *International Review of Missions*, xiii. 50, art. by Hodous p. 262.
[2] Hu Suh, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

scep ticalas Roman augurs, engaged in divining, exorcizing, and furnishing funeral ceremonies for gain; and a laity superstitious and irreverent, given to perfunctory kotowing and prayer prompted by the most practical motives."[1] This darker aspect of idol-worship bound up with terrible immorality of conduct is pictured once for all in the Epistle to the Romans.[2] Which of the two views of non-Christian religion, the lenient verdict of the speech on Areopagus[3] or the black description in Romans, is more true to the facts? Undoubtedly both are true. Outside of Christ, the religions of the world are seen at the worst in their attitude to women. When we hear of services conducted by Buddhist or Taoist priests in Tokyo and Shanghai for the success of immoral houses, and when we read of little girls in South India "married to the god," we are face to face with a depth of degradation unknown to the modern West.[4] The disease, to which the fall of the old Græco-Roman civilization was chiefly due, a low ideal of woman, is eating into the heart even of so advanced a nation as Japan.

What then has the West to offer to the East? Have we an answer to the challenge of the ethnic creeds? How are we to justify the continual expenditure of life and talent and treasure poured out by Europe and America for no purpose of personal or national gain? Such questions, sometimes asked in scorn, have to be faced by each of us. On the back of a volume issued for the Rationalist Press Association under the title *Christianizing the Heathen*, containing the results of an inquiry as to whether the return from

[1] Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 218. [2] Rom. i. 18–32. [3] Acts xvii. 22–31.

[4] To this statement there has to be admitted an exception, for in Tsarist days such houses in Russia were recognized government institutions, and at the opening ceremonies the premises were blessed by priests of the Orthodox Church.—See *The Official Report of the British Trades Union Delegation to Russia*, 1924, p. 104.

Overseas Missions bears a reasonable relation to the outlay, there is a well-drawn picture showing a pleasant bearded clergyman offering a Bible to three disapproving Orientals, who are holding their own sacred books. That advertisement unintentionally suggests the first part of our twofold message to the East. *We must give to all men the best we have, because we are their brothers.* It may not be forgotten that Europe has already given Asia of her worst. Among the nobler spirits of India and China the materialism of our civilization rouses unflinching opposition ; the imperialism of a dominating Europe is everywhere met by hostility. Are the followers of Christ able to repair the damage done ? Until we are deeply convinced of the brotherhood of man, we are apt to waver in our support of costly enterprises, aiming not at commercial or political aggrandizement, but at the reconciliation of the sundered and suspicious members of the human family. The idea of a common humanity, of the solidarity of mankind, is denied by the non-Christian faiths. Even Mohammedanism and Buddhism are utterly inadequate in this vital respect, the former being hostile to those outside its pale and unjust to women and slaves within it, while the latter can make nothing of the mass of ordinary citizens, and hence leaves them to their blind superstitions.

The elementary Pauline dogma, all nations of one blood,[1] even where it is accepted without conscious mental reservation, is like any other specifically Christian achievement, very difficult to put into operation throughout every department of life. It is no less difficult in Ireland than in China, and for exactly the same reason. Before our Lord uttered the Parable of the Good Samaritan, in which the ideal of human brotherhood is enshrined for all time, He had

[1] Acts xvii. 26.

already elicited from the inquiring lawyer the theological presupposition of the story.[1] There cannot be more than one human family, because there cannot be more gods than One, and He is our Father. *As children, therefore, we must introduce our estranged brothers to their Father and ours.* That is the second part, and by far the greater part, of the message of the West to the East. Indeed, properly understood, everything is included in this part of the message. Joseph Parker once declared: "There are comparative religions, but Christianity is not one of them." When we consider the real need of men, we see in what sense that remark holds good. The answer to the other religions, the complete justification for our world campaign, lies not so much in detailed refutation of the flaws in the other creeds, but rather in the all-embracing fact that the world is in dire need of God.

The Report on the Missionary Message prepared for the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 pleads for "a new discovery of God," alike on behalf of the millions beyond the Church's bounds, and of ourselves. "The whole missionary movement of the past century," we are told, "began with Carey's 'Expect great things from God: Attempt great things for God,' and . . . its progress hitherto has been measured by the degree of its expectancy, which again has depended upon the depth and strength and grandeur of its idea of God." [2] "The whole teaching of the New Testament," says Dr. J. H. Moulton, "is concentrated on the task of driving home the central fact that a right understanding of God is the most powerful of all means for producing right conduct." [3] Whether among the

[1] Luke x. 25–37.
[2] *World Missionary Conference*, 1910, vol. iv, pp. 234, 262.
[3] Moulton, *Religions and Religion*, p. 128.

cultured nations of Asia or among the wildest of Pacific Islanders, the power impelling towards a moral life is found in the long run only in religion, arising out of men's convictions as to the living God.

"The Maker and Father of this all," says Plato in the *Timæus*, "it is a hard task to find, and when a man has found Him, it is impossible to declare Him to all men." Outside of Christianity, and sometimes within it, those who essayed that hard task have continually tended to swing to one extreme or the other, a concrete image or a featureless abstraction. The Greek "philosophers seemed to think the greater the abstraction, the greater the truth." For Plotinus, the Absolute transcends thought and even being, and "is just nothing except sheer pure oneness." [1] In Egypt they have a rhyme which is thus rendered by Canon Gairdner :—

> Whatever idea your mind comes at,
> I tell you flat,
> God is NOT that.

Between the two extremes of the philosopher's unknowable Absolute and the artistic or repulsive images of the groping multitude, both equally devoid of saving and uplifting power, stands the religion of Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh. How wonderful is the change wrought by Christ !

> I lay in cruel bondage,
> Thou cam'st and mad'st me free !

"These words from Paul Gerhardt's Advent hymn," says Dr. Schweitzer, "express better than any others what Christianity means for primitive man." [2] A Japanese Christian, Mr. Utschimura, describing his

[1] Workman, *Christian Thought to the Reformation*, p. 58.
The Vedantin, emphasizing the immanence of Brahman, refuses the ascription to him of any attribute.—Cf. Chap. VII.

[2] Schweitzer, *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, p. 153.

conversion, says: "I was now taught that there was only one God and not many—over eight millions, as I had formerly believed. . . . One God, not many—that was a glad message to my soul. Belief in one God made me a new man. I fancied that I understood the whole of Christianity, so inspired was I by this belief in one God." [1]

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," [2] Nothing in the other faiths approaches this fact. Nowhere is God truly known to be our Father except in the company of Christ. "No one cometh unto the Father, but by Me." [3] The failure of every type of non-Christian religion and irreligion is due simply to their having no Christ. "In Him all things hold together," [4] and outside of Him all things fall apart. Take away Jesus, and there may remain a graven image or an Unknowable First Cause, but not a Heavenly Father. That is why the urgency of our campaign is so great.

Now consider Jesus. When we say that He is God the Son, what do we mean? The core of the mighty affirmation, made by the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325, was, strictly speaking, a statement of faith regarding the Divine Being, whom no man has ever seen. Against all appearances in a brutal world of blood and iron, Love was lifted to the highest throne.[5] We cannot prove that the unknown Source and Goal of all things lives and works with no other personality than that of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. We cannot prove it, but we can believe—can we really believe?—that *God is like Christ.*

Hitherto the Christian Church as a whole has declined in practice to accept this creed. The refusal is by no

[1] Warneck, *The Living Forces of the Gospel*, pp. 211, 212.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 19. [3] John xiv. 6. [4] Col. i. 17.
[5] Cf. Cairns, *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, pp. 175, 176.

means strange. The Gospel of the love of God makes an irresistible appeal to the distressed heart of man. But we shrink from the intellectual and moral discipline involved in the application of the Gospel to every region of the outer and the inner life. It requires an extremely arduous effort of faith to believe God's character to have been *completely* revealed in Jesus Christ. Is the humility of Jesus an essential and abiding attribute of the Divine King? How, we ask, can a wicked world be governed according to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount? If, for example, war is to be excluded from the occupations possible to Christians, will not evil be speedily triumphant? Nevertheless the doctrine of the Church, Catholic and Protestant, is that God was in Christ, not as a partial manifestation, but without reserve, unveiling for us His mind and heart in daily word and act, the Creator and Ruler of the world, the Father of men—there before our eyes, once for all. It follows that the severity of God can only be the severity of Christ, who was bruised for the transgressions of both His enemies and friends. And—what is still more wonderful—it also follows that the Friend of little children is at the very centre of the Godhead, in supreme control of all authority and power throughout the universe.[1]

To what end does our Master direct all authority in heaven and on earth? The answer to this final question concerning the missionary message brings us to the purpose for which Christ lived and died. You are aware of the remarkable circumstance that, from the very beginning of the Christian Church, the main theme of our Lord's preaching fell into the background, and has only been of late brought prominently forward owing to the revival of New Testament study and of

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18.

true Christianity within the last hundred years. The first evangel had for its burden, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." [1] As proclaimed by Jesus, the coming of the Kingdom depended on men's efforts in co-operation with God. But almost from the start the Church deliberately postponed the serious attempt to realize in actual life the social ideal of Jesus. To such an extent has this insidious heresy eaten into our very vitals that we hesitate to believe our religion to be intended for mundane affairs, like politics, economics, and citizenship. Hence it is that "Copec" in Birmingham opened a new era in the history of the Church. By nothing was the beginning of this epoch more conspicuously heralded than by the assertion of the Conference, including representatives of all the Churches, that "all war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ." [2] Although during the first three centuries this interpretation of Christianity was very widely prevalent, no representative Council of the Church ever before made such a declaration, from the Day of Pentecost until the year 1924.

To recapitulate. The message of the West to the East is given in the words which sum up the Gospel, *God in Christ*. The Father of Jesus is God, and there is no other God. Whatever trait of personality belonged in the days of His flesh to the Son has always belonged to the character of the Father. Conversely, action of any kind impossible to Jesus can never be possible to God. Only by living with Jesus and working in His companionship under the guidance of His Spirit from day to day can we find the Father and

[1] Mark i. 15.

[2] The Roman Catholic members of committees did not actually sign the reports. The pronouncement quoted above did not commit the Conference to a decision as to possible participation in war. The words were intended to be an avowal that Christianity and war of any kind are entirely opposed. See *The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C.*, pp. 178, 179.

be changed into His likeness. It is at the Cross that the very heart of God's uttermost love is revealed. Because Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree,[1] we have come to know the awful truth that as long as sin remains unrepentant anywhere, the greatest sufferer for the sin is not the erring child, but his Father. And with our eyes wide open to the desperate condition of the world without and to the treachery of our fickle hearts within, we who belong to Christ dare to believe in the coming triumph of His Kingdom: we dare to believe that the Kingdom of Love is a social ideal, which can be put into operation now.

It is especially to the students of all nations that such a programme makes its appeal. The best framework for the coming Kingdom, as yet invented by the Church, is the World's Student Christian Federation. The last conference of the Federation was held at Peking in 1922. Whatever differences among the seven hundred and fifty men and women from thirty-two countries may have arisen in the discussions on the application of our Lord's teaching to the whole of life, there was entire unanimity of conviction on one point, namely, that Jesus Christ loved and obeyed, and He alone, can solve all the problems vexing China and the other nations of the present day.

Speaking for myself, it is to the Student Movement, under God, that I owe the happiness of missionary life. The immediate occasion for signing the declaration [2] was a remark made in 1893 by the Travelling Secretary of the Student Volunteer Missionary Union, one of the Cambridge Seven. In reply to the question, "If

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 24.

[2] The form of the declaration then was: "It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary."

we volunteer, and our Church is unable to send us out, what are we to do?" Mr. Polhill-Turner simply said: "You must find your way out somehow." That unexpected dart must have been barbed for me. The decisive consideration was this: there being opportunities at home for everyone to hear the Gospel, our Saviour's last command meant in my case that I must give a reason for *not* going abroad. I could think of no valid excuse for staying at home. If that sounds like unwilling surrender, at least I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. And despite all backslidings, the reward has been God's best gift to me, a fuller knowledge and a greater love of His Son Jesus Christ, the Chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One.

In closing our studies on Comparative Religion and Christian Missions, allow me to leave with you three verses from a beautiful poem by the blind prophet of Edinburgh:—[1]

Gather us in, Thou love that fillest all!
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold!
Rend each man's temple veil and bid it fall,
That we may know that Thou hast been of old;
Gather us in!

Gather us in, we worship only Thee;
In varied names we stretch a common hand;
In diverse forms a common soul we see;
In many ships we seek one spirit-land;
Gather us in!

Some seek a Father in the heavens above,
Some ask a human image to adore,
Some crave a spirit vast as life and love:
Within Thy mansions we have all and more;
Gather us in!

[1] Dr. George Matheson.

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